

THE
GOLDEN GALLEONS
OF CARIBBEE

GORDON HILL GRAHAME

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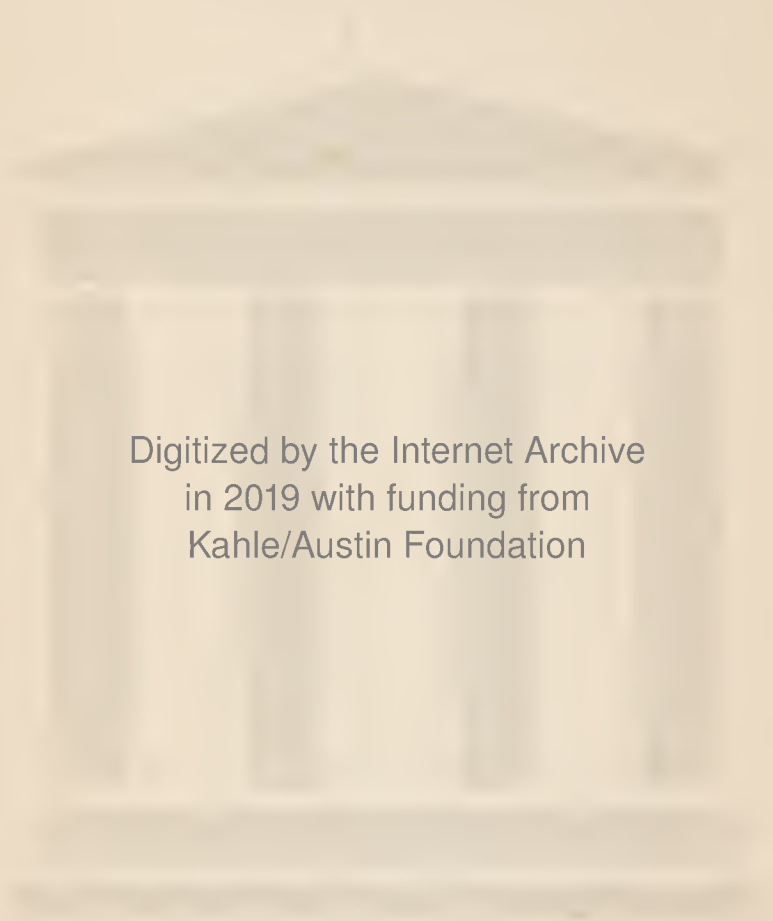


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The Golden Galleons of Caribbee



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*The Golden Galleons
of Caribbee*

BY
GORDON HILL GRAHAME

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
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MIDNIGHT—December 31st, 1654.

The stentorian shout of the ship's watch ushered in the New Year; weary feet shuffled across the deck; the sound of a sleepy yawn drifted back from somewhere forward of the mainmast and then, save for the usual creaking of blocks and the soft purr of water swishing alongside, silence reigned again aboard the *Happy Adventure*.

The night was dark and the sky overcast. From off the Scilly Isles, miles astern of the stout vessel, a gentle breeze urged the *Happy Adventure* along and so balmy was the air that one would have sworn it was a night in late spring rather than in the middle of winter.

From her window in the long, overhanging stern of the armed merchantman, Lady Joan Manvers gazed out upon the phosphorescent wake of the vessel, her eyes striving to pierce the darkness for what lay beyond—one hundred leagues beyond—in the little seaport town of Plymouth. The darkness rifted and she looked yearningly upon the scene she saw pictured in her mind's eye before her; a scene that caused the unbidden tears to well into her eyes and to fall unheeded upon her outstretched arms.

In her imagination she pictured the good folk of the Three Towns holding wassail on this, the dawn of the New Year, and in the great room of the "Jolly Sailors' " Tavern, wherein she had been a guest for the fortnight before the *Happy Adventure* sailed, she saw the worthy people who had been her fellow-guests lift high their flowing bowls and drink success to the good ship and to the stout-hearted folk who sailed her. These hazy figures she saw as in a dream and, ill-defined, but distinct from the rest, one face stood out—that of a young man who stood apart, his eyes downcast and his wine untasted.

"Ah, Garry," she murmured brokenly as she gripped her hands together. "Thou knowest that it was for the best that we parted—that I wed Sir Howard and sailed away. But—Oh, Garry, Garry——!"

She buried her face in her hands as she sank to her knees, the low edge of the window casement forming a rest for her quivering arms. But the picture of the distant hostel with its group of jolly merry-makers faded slowly from her mind's eye and then, as the vision grew more nebulous and indistinct, the picture resolved itself into the face of her erstwhile lover, Garry Graeme.

She saw again his wistful face as he said farewell to her on the evening before she set sail for

America. He had stood in front of the deep, blazing fire, his head bent forward and his eyes half closed as he gently took her hand and pressed it tenderly to his lips.

"It grieves me sore to see thee depart, Joan," he had said in passionate whisper. "Thy love has meant so much to me—even thy marriage with Sir Howard Manvers has but served to inflame mine honest passion for thee."

Joan reprovingly patted his lips with light fingers. No one at the moment was paying them attention.

"Thou must not talk in that manner, my Garry," she admonished, smiling bravely at him, albeit with a scarce repressed choke in her voice. "'Tis not meet that thou shouldst so address the wife of Sir Howard."

"But thou lovest him not, Joan," returned Garry in a hoarse whisper. "I know that I am the person whom thou truly lovest and I will follow thee to the Virginia plantations whensoever I can raise the money to pay my passage. Sir Howard is an old man—he cannot live many years and——"

"Tush, Garry! I will not listen to such speech!" breathed Joan nervously. "Have a care! My husband approaches!"

The picture faded and the gurgling lap of the following sea brought her back to the present. She raised her head and gazed sorrowfully out

into the darkness, blinking rapidly as her eyes welled again.

A wave, larger than its fellows, gently raised the stern of the vessel. To the accompaniment of creaking timbers and a souging from the rudder post, the *Happy Adventure* curtsied to the swell, the water dripping musically from her exposed under timbers before she settled back again. Joan was insensible to this portent, this forerunner of a hurricane that was in the making, for once again her thoughts had wandered and, in mind, she was back among the Scottish hills and tarns of her native land.

She saw again the massive stone walls of her father's castle in the Highlands; the green sward without its age-grey walls, surrounded by the forest in which aforetime she had been wont to stroll with Garry Graeme—her lover; saw again in bitter retrospect the happenings of that September day, three years ago, when an exhausted courier had ridden through the gates of the castle with the dread news of her father's death on the bloody field of Worcester—followed a month later by the destruction of her ancestral home by the troops of Cromwell, the "Protector."

Garry Graeme had been wounded on that fateful day and had barely escaped with his life. For months he had lain at death's door in the hut of a sympathetic countryman and

had then, by painful stages, fled the country and taken refuge in Spain. When conditions had appeared favourable he had returned to Scotland, nearly three years after the disastrous fight at Worcester, and had found his boyhood sweetheart married to the knight whom Cromwell had placed in charge of the conquered district wherein the Hamiltons—Joan's family—and the Graemes had been formerly lairds of the land.

Joan Hamilton, now Lady Manvers, had long given up her lover as dead and through necessity had renounced her faith and become the bride of Sir Howard Manvers. That Manvers was all that a courtly English gentleman of those days should be, and though he loved his young wife with unselfish devotion, Joan's heart was with the lover she had thought dead. When he returned from exile, worn and penniless, the old love flamed forth with renewed intensity and she received with an emotion that was almost akin to gladness, the news that her husband had been given a post in the plantations of America—for thus would she be spared the daily and hourly heartache that was hers when Garry was nigh.

On the long journey through England her lover had managed to follow, and he had arrived in Plymouth but three days after Sir Howard and his bride had put up at the "Jolly

Sailors." The young man had wearily staggered into the town and with the last of his gold had engaged quarters at the selfsame hostel.

Sir Howard, though he felt a grudging compassion toward the young man whose story was no secret to him, jealously guarded Joan so that the young people might not see one another alone and though, at a few cherished intervals, Garry contrived to speak with his beloved, he suffered untold tortures as he watched the preparations being made to take his sweetheart out of his life.

And so the stout, high-decked merchantman moved slowly forward through the night and as the following seas, urged by the increasing gale, became more and more noticeable, the ship dipped and curtsied to such an extent that Joan Manvers was soon forced to close her windows against the tossing, spume-capped crests of the boisterous waves.

And in an empty scuttle-butt a recumbent figure gently rolled from side to side with the increasing vigour of the storm, and not until a particularly violent jerk of the vessel banged his face against the damp side of the cask, did the occupant thereof awake, for Garry Graeme, stowaway, had been sleeping.

To the Briton of those days the American colonies of New England and Virginia were

shadowy lands of mystery and promise. The troubles by which the homeland had recently been disturbed had scarce affected the Jamestown plantation, and the hearts of the majority of the *Happy Adventure's* passengers had beat with eager anticipation as the vessel sailed out upon the broad bosom of the Western Ocean.

But upon this, the morning of the first day of the New Year, the more timorous among the five-score passengers abroad the vessel mouthed terrified prayers as the cumbrous ship rolled heavily upon the angry sea. The gale, which had increased in intensity during the night, had assumed cyclonic proportions, and though the sun rose in a cloudless sky, the captain of the vessel scanned with anxious eye the north-eastern horizon.

"A rough day, Master Ballantyne," observed Sir Howard as he struggled along the rail to a position alongside the captain.

"Aye—and rougher it will be eftsoons," replied Ballantyne, shaking his head dubiously as the wind, through almost bare masts, whistled and shrieked demoniacally. "An' the gale were to blow from that quarter for several days we'd be blown to the Azores!"

Sir Howard blinked his eyes and essayed to speak, but a sudden blast of wind caught him full in the mouth and he had to avert his face to save himself from strangling.

“The Azores!” he managed to gasp during a lull in the gale. “But is’t not rumoured that the Spaniards be thereabouts?”

Captain Ballantyne steadied himself against the wheel and the two sailors who clung fast to the spokes on either side braced themselves against the lurch of the vessel.

“The dogs!” he exclaimed. “They and their black-robed Inquisition devils! There may be Spanish ships at the Azores—God grant we do not fall foul of them!”

He spat viciously toward the deck.

“But Admiral William Penn——” gasped Manvers, clutching desperately at his wide-brimmed hat. “Will he not have——”

“Bah!” sneered Ballantyne contemptuously. “Penn is no sailor—and as for that old woman, General Venables——!”

He again spat expressively toward the rail and then, the wind rising in a crescendo of fury, further speech was impossible for a space.

But the gruff old sea-dog had maligned the unfortunate William Penn, not by word but by implication. This gentleman, father of a more famous son of the same name, had been given command of a fleet whose mission was the capture of Santo Domingo, Cuba and the Isthmus of Panama, if possible. It mattered not that England and Spain were nominally at peace with one another; Spain was a Roman

Catholic country and her ships were therefore legitimate prey for the Navy of the Commonwealth—besides, there was much riches to be gained by the treasure ships, the golden galleons of Spain, that sailed from out the rich Spanish settlements on the Caribbean. To be sure, as in the days of Elizabeth, the Spaniards still massacred and enslaved Englishmen found within the precincts of the Caribbean, and England naturally fought her pretensions, but the fact remains that Penn's expedition was one of spoliation and conquest and international law would not now tolerate so piratical an undertaking.

Penn was a conscientious officer and an able mariner, but the venture was badly managed, and for this Cromwell must be chiefly blamed. The fleet set sail from England about a fortnight preceding the departure of the *Happy Adventure* for the Virginias and, against the advice of Penn, Cromwell divided the command between the Admiral and General Robert Venables. Their force of about nine thousand men consisted not of tried Puritan soldiers, but of the riffraff of London streets and disreputable recruits from other cities. With the exception of a few of Penn's sailors and a regiment of soldiers under Colonel Otway, it was a debauched and cowardly host, badly equipped and badly led.

“Penn's fleet will be nearing the Caribbees

by now," continued Ballantyne. "I envy him not."

"But—but——" quavered Sir Howard "—the Spaniards—if we meet them we are lost!" Ballantyne stared amusedly at the other man, who clung pitifully to the drenched rail.

"Have no fear, Sir Howard," he reassured him. "Before the day is out the wind will be blowing from the east. But whether we be blown to the Azores or the Caribbees you'll have occasion to thank your God that we have not foundered on the way. If this gale blows more rudely——"

"I do not fear for mine own safety," cried Sir Howard tremulously; "but, tell me—is there danger?"

"Aye, there is," was Ballantyne's succinct reply.

And, true to his prediction, the gale increased in strength and the wind veered as the day lengthened, until it blew straight from the east. With the advent of another night the sky again became overcast and to the terrors of the howling gale was added the horror of darkness.

It was a very much bruised and battered man who crawled forth from the empty scuttlebutt that night. Garry Graeme was tired and hungry and, as he groped his painful way along the deck, clinging desperately to every handhold that presented itself, his weary body could scarce resist the snatching fingers of the gale,

and he was hard pressed to save himself from being washed overboard.

With but one strip of canvas on her groaning masts, and that a torn piece of the mainsail, the *Happy Adventure* plunged before the roaring tempest, her low deck amidships a seething welter of destruction. The following seas converged around her high deck aft and tore ravenously at every movable object in the waist of the ship. At the wheel the indomitable Ballantyne and a loyal few of his sailors successfully, though with almost superhuman labour, kept the vessel flying before the hurricane, else she would surely have foundered in the trough of the gigantic seas.

A sadly-drenched and exhausted man fought his way against the gale and eventually reached the comparative safety of the after gangway. Garry found the trap that covered it firmly closed but, at his repeated and insistent knocking, the door was cautiously opened, he was seized and dragged below, and the covering was placed in position again before the cabin and its huddled inmates should be flooded out by the succeeding wave.

No one noticed that the newcomer was a stranger. As a matter of fact the majority of the people aboard the vessel were unknown to one another and, though several of the persons present in the stuffy little cabin had spoken to

Garry when he was a guest at the "Jolly Sailors," so changed was his appearance by the ordeal he had recently undergone that not a ^{young} soul recognised him, and he was taken, by those who gave it a thought, as a member of the ship's crew.

Sir Howard Manvers and his lady had, as has been heretofore mentioned, a cabin in the stern of the ship and one hurried glance about the darkened and crowded room in which he found himself was sufficient to inform Garry that she whom he longed, yet dreaded to meet, was elsewhere.

The stuffiness of the cabin was indescribable and it was quite impossible to keep one's footing. Garry clung for a moment to the ladder by which he had descended from the deck above and then, on his hands and knees, he made his erratic way between the recumbent and whimpering forms of the terrified passengers, toward a small door that appeared to lead further into the ship. He opened it and found himself in a pantry, or larder, along whose walls were deep-sunk shelves stocked with food. The only inmate of the little room, evidently the keeper of the stores, was too far gone in *mal de mer* to do aught but groan when Garry asked his permission to sample the food.

And then, for four more days and nights while the ship, driven by the full fury of the

gale, tore wildly toward the west, Garry remained in that vile-smelling cabin, wretchedly sick and not caring that about him were others in equally desperate plight; nor mindful, on the fourth day, that half-a-score of the inertly rolling forms about him were corpses.

The sanitary conveniences aboard a seventeenth century sailing ship were of the crudest, and the condition of the after-cabin of the *Happy Adventure* after some forty people had been locked in its dingy airless space for the better part of a week simply beggars description. When the effluvium of this filthy wallow passed endurance, Garry, weak and emaciated though he was, determined to escape from that foul-smelling hole before he should die of suffocation. With this desire uppermost in his mind, he managed at last to reach the bottom of the ladder by which he had gained entrance to the cabin, but the man was too weak to climb to the top; the vessel was rolling, if possible, more violently than at any time before and, after two or three unsuccessful attempts to mount to the trap-door, Garry fell back defeated, his brain reeling with nausea and the strain of his exertions.

In their cabin at the stern of the vessel, while the rest of the passengers in the crowded quarters fore and aft were slowly dying of exhaustion and suffocation, Sir Howard and

his lady existed as best they could. Of the two Joan suffered the least, but Sir Howard was frankly and unabashedly seasick. Of food they had none—and neither noticed the lack. Days and nights passed in interminable succession and, in common with their fellow-passengers, the two miserable people prayed earnestly that the storm might abate and the tilting decks of the ship become stable once again. Then, on the night of the sixth day of the storm, the hurricane reached its climax and the masts went by the board.

The after-mast, whose butt extended down through the cabin in which Garry Graeme was lying, tore its way in falling through a large section of the cabin roof before it snapped off and, through the resultant breach, the salty, spume-filled air pervaded the pest-hole, bringing fresh life to those who were able to fill their lungs with its salty strength. The dismasted hulk now rode more easily upon the disturbed surface of the sea, and though the hapless survivors were terror-stricken by what had occurred, a noticeable change for the better was soon apparent in their demeanour. During that night the wind abated and the waves ceased their thunderous clamour against the straining sides of the merchantman.

With the day came the sun, its beams shining down upon a sea whose waves were still stu-

pendous in size and upon which the battered hulk of the *Happy Adventure* pitched and tossed in sullen obeisance to their might ; but it was a sea that was momentarily growing less violent, and Captain Ballantyne, before he swooned with exhaustion, swore roundly in the fulness of his relief, for he knew that his vessel would ride out what was left of the gale.

Four-and-twenty persons had succumbed during the course of the storm, and the bodies of those unfortunates were committed to the deep before repairs were attempted. During the next two days, in which Sir Howard and Lady Manvers kept to their cabin, the torn masts and rigging were cut away and a jury-mast and sail erected. Garry Graeme had recovered sufficiently on the second day to lend a hand to the hard-working crew and, though Captain Ballantyne looked at him askance, the old seaman merely rubbed his chin and smiled dubiously to himself as he shrugged his shoulders and turned away. Ballantyne knew the young man by sight and he was well aware of the boy's attachment for Lady Manvers. That he was a stowaway mattered little to the captain of the vessel under the circumstances ; the aid of every available man was required now to ensure the safe arrival of the *Happy Adventure* in the Jamestown colony.

The jury-sail, a clumsy affair attached to the

stump of the mainmast, served its purpose well. The wind blew steadily from the east, a balmy, tropical breeze, and the good ship jogged along toward the western hemisphere at a pace which, though aggravatingly slow, was at least steady. How far the vessel had been blown out of her course during the six days of the storm it was impossible to say. The crude instruments of navigation used by seafaring men were inaccurate, to say the least, and, while a fairly approximate reckoning could be made of one's latitude, the longitude could but be a mere matter of guesswork.

"We'll not make the Virginias on this course, I trow," observed Sir Howard Manvers two days after the storm, as he sank limply to a chair beside the steering wheel.

Captain Ballantyne looked down at his white-faced passenger under beetling brows.

"Your ship appears to be pointed too far south," continued the old man in answer to his own assertion.

"Aye," remarked the captain moodily, "and to the south we'll continue to sail until this wind shifts. My rudder is damaged and I dare not risk it breaking by sailing across the wind—even if I could do so with yon bit of canvas." He pointed contemptuously to the jury-sail and resumed his stern contemplation of the watery wastes ahead of him.

Manvers sighed nervously.

“Then if we continue on this course——” he tentatively suggested.

“We’ll strike the Caribbees,” was Ballantyne’s decisive answer.

Manvers shuddered, and his pale face went whiter still.

“I was assured by my lord Cromwell before I sailed,” he quavered, “that there would be little danger in making the trip to the Virginias. He assured me that you were a capable mariner——”

Ballantyne snorted.

“I am grateful to Cromwell for his good opinion of me,” he scathingly retorted, “and I beg to assure you, Sir Howard, that he indeed spake the truth. But by my soul, great though he be in affairs of state, the Protector has no authority over the elements. Marry——! He may be able to whip the Dutch, but the regicide cannot stop the wind from blowing where it listeth!”

“But the Spaniards——?”

“Admiral Penn will take care of the Dons, Sir Howard.”

“But you said——” Manvers closed his mouth with a snap, and his eyes opened wide as he stared at the approaching figure of Garry Graeme.

“That man!” he exclaimed. “What brings

him here, Ballantyne, and how came he aboard this vessel ? ”

The captain shrugged his shoulders as Garry approached.

“ I had not seen him before,” he lied complacently. “ Methinks he must have come aboard at Plymouth.”

Which obvious deduction was lost on Sir Howard as he regarded Garry with an amazed and angry frown.

“ Well—well——! ” he began as Garry saluted the two men.

“ Your lady, Sir Howard ? ” he quietly asked. “ I trust that she is none the worse for her recent terrifying experience ? ”

Manvers gasped.

“ I thought you safe in Plymouth ! ” he managed at last to say.

“ I decided to better my fortune in America,” replied Garry respectfully. “ But Lady Manvers, Sir Howard—tell me that she has suffered no ill-effects from the rigour of the storm.”

Sir Howard glared at the young man.

“ My wife’s health is no concern of yours, sirrah ! ” he said ungraciously. “ It was very imprudent of you to have followed her aboard this vessel ! ”

Garry flushed, but he made no reply to the older man’s angry remarks.

“ I charge you with the arrest of this young

vagabond, Master Ballantyne!" shrilled Sir Howard furiously, his better nature quite submerged in the wave of jealousy that overswept him as he looked up into the handsome features of the young Scot.

Garry clenched his fists and seemed about to strike the older man, but when Sir Howard rose to his feet and confronted the angry youth, Garry's rage melted as he noted the frailty of the old knight and he turned to the captain.

"Master Ballantyne," he said. "I protest Sir Howard Manvers' assertion that I am a vagabond, and it ill becomes an English knight to so malign a former foeman, whose only fault is that the fortunes of war have left him penniless."

Sir Howard's face underwent a radical transformation.

"Forgive my hasty exhibition of temper, Master Graeme," he cried apologetically. "I am an old man and the perils of the voyage have unstrung my nerves. I have been anxious for the welfare of my lady, and I cannot view with equanimity your presence aboard this vessel, for I know that she cares for you—and I am jealous of her love."

"I—I——" began Garry in embarrassment.

"Master Graeme will not annoy Lady Manvers with his attentions," declared the captain, frowning severely upon the worried young man, albeit with the ghost of a twinkle

in his eye. "I can promise you that, Sir Howard."

Garry looked down at his feet.

"I have no intention of annoying her," he began nervously. "If I chance to see Lady——"

"You will not see her," retorted the captain.

"But——"

"I can put you in irons for boarding this vessel in the manner you did," interrupted Ballantyne, "and, much as I need your services now, I shall have no hesitancy in doing so if you allow Lady Manvers to suspect that you are a fellow passenger aboard the *Happy Adventure*."

Garry stared at the seaman, made as if to speak, choked, and then, bowing low to the knight, he retraced his steps and disappeared into the forecastle.

II

The Guardian of the Main

UNDER tropic skies and into tropic seas rolled the *Happy Adventure*. The blue of the sky was mirrored by ocean, and the silver-tipped waves, speeding along before the balmy breezes, raced in merry frolic with the slow-moving merchantman. Bright-hued, the nautilus floated, iridescent, upon the warm surface of the water and before the ship's up-

curved and ornamented beak, shoals of startled flying-fish dived into the sea, the silvery sheen of their dripping scales reflecting the rays of the startled sun.

The days grew ever longer as the ship was steadily blown toward the south and throughout their sunny length Garry kept well away from the afterpart of the vessel, from which Joan rarely moved. The constant sight of the girl and his inability to approach her was galling to the harassed soul of the young Scot. He longed to kiss the hem of those dainty skirts, the colourful flutter of which, as the vagrant breeze played about the maiden's adored figure, he so often saw from his position forward. He longed to make his presence known to her; only the thought of what this rash act might entail—the thought of being cast in irons and imprisoned in one of the filthy, rat-ridden holds below acted as a deterrent, and Garry, frantic with love of her, resignedly kept himself out of Joan Manvers' sight.

But there came a night when the *Happy Adventure*, despite the fact that she was now provided with three serviceable jury-sails, floated motionless under the low-hanging stars. Not a breath of air stirred the placid surface of the water, in whose ebon depth the sky was reflected back as though the vessel lay suspended between two firmaments.

No sound disturbed the utter silence in which the vessel lay enwrapped. The two lanterns cast their fitful circle of light around their immediate vicinity and, from the open fore-castle hatch, a misty glow wavered thereabouts. The watch forward leaned against the barrel of the capstan and whistled to himself as thoughts of far-off Devon filled his sleepy head and, idly standing by the wheel in the afterpart of the vessel, Garry Graeme gazed up into the heavens and his idle fancy traced the beloved lineaments of his lost love in every thickly clustered constellation.

There was absolutely no motion to the vessel save that occasioned by the fugitive zephyr and Garry had but to touch the wheel for a few minutes at infrequent intervals. No person shared the watch with him, and Captain Ballantyne, asleep in his cabin, considered that circumstances precluded any possibility of the stowaway and Lady Manvers meeting with one another. But the grizzled old salt had not reckoned on the effect of overmuch thinking of her absent lover, coupled with the charms of the languorous night on the yearning sensibilities of Joan Manvers.

Garry was looking forward into the night, his arms resting upon the smooth, highly-polished periphery of the teak-wood wheel when he became aware of the soft tread of little feet

behind him. He started to turn, glad of the opportunity to forget for a moment the desires that obsessed him, but at the newcomer's first words he averted his face, his whole body quivering with emotion. He made a startled response to Joan Manvers' friendly salutation and he fervently prayed that she would pass by without recognising him.

"'Tis passing lonely astern there by myself," continued Joan, standing beside the man, "and I felt that I must speak with someone—else I would have assuredly gone mad."

"Aye," assented Garry in disguised tones. "I can feel for you."

Joan stared hard at the back of the steersman's head. She sniffed scornfully.

"No one can feel for me who has not suffered as I have suffered," she retorted resentfully, and her displeasure was a little more keen in that a common sailor had presumed to talk with her as an equal. "You forget yourself, sirrah!"

Garry sadly smiled to himself.

"I would that I could, my lady," he sighed despondently, "then, perchance, I would not so often think of thee."

Joan's gasp of angry indignation had somewhat of surprise and incredulity in it and, when Garry recklessly turned and crushed her to him, her sudden ejaculation of fright was stifled beneath her lover's caresses.

The girl, almost fainting in his arms, looked up into the man's face in terror and then, as the wonderful truth dawned upon her that this was *Garry*—Garry, whom she had thought trudging alone the weary miles back to Scotland—she resigned herself with an incredulously happy sigh to his embrace.

And only the stars looked down on their reunion—and no alien ear heard the tender things they whispered one to another.

Came a day when the waters changed from blue to green and numerous sandy islands and coral shoals gave evidence that the mainland was not far away. On the evening of the day upon which the first of the islands was discovered, the last rays of the setting sun illumined a distant mountain peak which lay, many leagues distant to the west, a faint, dark outline, more ethereal than real. When morning dawned again the *Happy Adventure* was gliding past a thickly-wooded shore whose low-lying savannahs extended for miles inland and finally and abruptly ended in a seeming straight line against the massy bulk of the distant mountains. It was the western end of the island of La Española, known to the English as Hispaniola, and the coast along which the *Happy Adventure* was sailing was that of what was known in later days as the republic of Haiti.

But though the Spaniards had inhabited Hispaniola for the past century and a half, and although among those distant tropical forests were many Spanish settlements, no enemy ship put out from shore in pursuit of the English vessel, and Captain Ballantyne, judging rightly, opined that the Spaniards were lying low until Admiral Penn should vacate the Spanish Main.

It was Ballantyne's intention now to seek the protection of Penn and Venables and, with the aid of the naval artificers in attendance on the Fleet, so repair the *Happy Adventure* that he might beat up the North American coast and arrive safely at the Virginia plantations. But the ill-luck that had pursued the gallant old seaman still dogged him and, three days later, while the English merchantman was sailing along the Caribbean shore of Hispaniola, disaster, complete and terrible, overtook him.

The *Happy Adventure*, running before the wind, approached the five mile strait which lies between Cape Beata, the most southerly projection of Hispaniola, and a large island of the same name. As the vessel slowly passed the high-bluffed island she entered an area where the air was still and, as she lay becalmed, there appeared above the extended sand spit of the cape ahead of her the lofty masts and billowing sails of a large ship.

All hands aboard the *Happy Adventure* congregated on the decks as the stranger slowly sailed along behind the spit and many were the haphazard guesses as to what she might be. Even Garry Graeme, who, unbeknownst to Sir Howard Manvers or Captain Ballantyne, was now keeping tryst with Joan each night, came up on deck and joined the anxious people who stood around the wheel.

“God grant she be one of Penn’s vessels!” ejaculated Sir Howard fervently as he so forgot himself as to hold Garry’s shoulder for support.

Captain Ballantyne said nothing, but his swarthy face grew grave as his eyes took in the configuration of the stranger’s sails. A confused chattering was going on among the many groups clustered about the ship’s decks as all eyes were focussed on the slow-moving vessel, and Joan Manvers, resting below, rose and came up on deck to ascertain what the ominous tenseness portended. When she saw her husband with his arm placed in friendly manner upon the shoulder of her lover she gasped, looked from the unwitting pair to the vessel which was exciting their interest and then, silently turning, she disappeared between decks again.

The hull of the strange vessel slowly came into view from behind the point and, as she did so, it was evident that the *Happy Adventure* had been observed for the first time. With a

great rushing about her decks, one of her great sails was lowered and the vessel was headed more sharply into the wind, thus bringing her course close to where the *Happy Adventure* lay idle.

Suddenly Captain Ballantyne swore a great oath and, leaping forward to the rail he sharply ordered all the women and children below and commanded that the twelve guns which the vessel carried be manned and made ready for action. His orders were immediately executed and, as the anxious sailors whistled eagerly for wind to come along and set in motion the helpless merchantman, the approaching vessel displayed her colours—the red and gold bars of an armed Spanish galleon !

“Do you two gentles abide with me,” said Ballantyne, turning to Sir Howard and Garry Graeme. “I will need ye at the wheel should a breeze spring up. And now to fight a merry battle—and may God help us !”

A puff of smoke heralded the firing of the opening gun aboard the galleon and a shot whistled harmlessly through the air above the vessel.

“A plague rot them !” ejaculated Sir Howard angrily. “We have women and children aboard this ship—my own little bride——”

“Never fear for me, my husband,” came in soft accents from behind him, and the three

men turned and looked into the face of Joan Manvers.

"This is no place for you," declared the captain respectfully to Joan. "There is danger——"

"And my place is therefore beside my husband," retorted Joan proudly, albeit her eyes were wistful as they fell for a moment upon the face of her lover.

"Fair and dear lady," whispered Sir Howard tenderly, taking the girl by the arm, "dost thou do as Master Ballantyne desires thee. Thou canst be of no avail on deck. Prithee, allow me to take thee below."

And so speaking he led the reluctant girl to the top of the companion-way and, after seeing her safely descend the stairs, he rejoined the others as the first gun on the *Happy Adventure* boomed forth its defiance.

And then a strange thing happened.

The Spanish ship suddenly turned as though to deliver a broadside but, instead of blazing destruction upon the crippled English ship, her mainsail was set again and she stood out toward the end of the island.

"Zounds!" cried Ballantyne, staring at the massive galleon with unbelieving eyes. He scratched his head in perplexity. "The Spaniard has suffered no scathe, and yet she flies from us as though——"

"A sail! A sail!" cried an excited voice,

and all eyes followed the direction in which the hand of the look-out on the bowsprit was pointing, and a sigh of relief arose as another vessel, an English ship of war by her lines, appeared from behind the island and set a course for the galleon.

“ ’Twill be Master William Penn ! ” whispered Garry excitedly and Ballantyne nodded his agreement.

“ That vessel must have been following our course of the morning,” he said, “ but I cannot understand why the rest of Penn’s ships have not accompanied her. Aye,” he mused, shading his eyes with his hand, “ I know yon frigate—she is the *Prudent Mary*, John Taylor, master, and she mounts thirty-four guns. The *Don* outmatches her—that galleon mounts over one hundred guns, or I’m a lurdan ! ”

The discrepancy between the size of the galleon and that of the frigate would have been ludicrous had the occasion been not so fraught with moment. The little Englishman came on so determinedly that the Spaniard luffed and then, coming abreast of the frigate, turned and came down the wind with her toward the *Happy Adventure*.

The two vessels were but a cable’s length apart when, of a sudden, the space between them was filled with smoke and belching flame, and an awful crashing noise, interspersed with

the booming of the cannon and the cries of stricken men floated down the wind toward the becalmed merchantman. Without cessation the cannonade continued, the galleon pouring shot into her intrepid antagonist until the upper works of the *Prudent Mary* were but a shattered mass of wreckage.

Garry, wide-eyed and fearful, gazed with fascination upon the stirring spectacle, and it was not until Sir Howard had been shaking his arm for some moments that he became aware of the fact that the aged knight had something of import to tell him.

"Look!" he shouted, and his voice could scarce be heard above the thunder of the guns: "Look at the gonfalon which floats from the mast-head of the frigate."

Garry looked to the top of the ship's mast where, at times completely hidden by the smoke of battle, a black standard floated in the breeze. He gazed at it intently and then, as the smoke rifted for a moment, he was horrified to see that upon the black background a white skull and cross-bones was painted.

"The Jolly Roger!" he exclaimed. "That vessel's a pirate!"

Captain Ballantyne heard his exclamation and he in turn glanced up at the *Prudent Mary's* flag.

"A mutineer!" he cried. "Yon ship has deserted Penn's fleet!"

The terrifying news that the vessel they had considered a friend was nothing less than a pirate, one of the many black scourges which infested the tropical seas, spread quickly about the *Happy Adventure* and it was with mixed feelings that the people aboard the helpless vessel viewed the sanguinary combat.

But, buccaneer or no, the sympathies of all were with the plucky little Englishman who had seemingly dropped from nowhere to their defence and, as one of the galleon's masts, freighted with its cumbrous load of sail, sank slowly over the Spaniard's side, a great cheer arose from the *Happy Adventure*.

The Englishman twice endeavoured to board, and was twice repulsed. Finally, after a half-hour of fighting, both ships drew apart as if by mutual consent while, like great dogs, they licked their wounds. The galleon, with black holes in her sides where the *Prudent Mary's* guns had torn her, drifted slowly off down the wind, her deck a mass of bustling seamen who hacked at the fallen débris with axes, only pausing long enough to scuttle to cover every time a shot from the *Happy Adventure's* almost useless guns whistled overhead. From the jagged gaps in the galleon's side, ominous scarlet streams trickled down, to spread sickeningly over the limpid green of the Caribbean water, mute evidence that the shots from the *Prudent Mary* had reached their mark.

The Englishman was in no better plight though, to be sure, his masts remained standing. More of the Spaniard's shots had flown through the rigging than had struck the pirate between wind and water, but at that the decks were a battered shambles and a raging fire blazed amidships. It was evident that it was this fire that had caused the Englishman to withdraw from the engagement, and it could be seen that every surviving sailor aboard the pirate was busy attempting to subdue the flames.

The *Happy Adventure* slowly drifted until she was broadside to the galleon and then, without cessation, her guns were discharged, one after the other, at the huge Spaniard. *El Gran Grifon*, as though irritated by the ineffectual fire of the armed merchantman, withdrew out of gunshot range and lay-to in the swell, half a league distant.

"She's had a bellyful," quoth Sir Howard hopefully, regarding the swaying bulk of the galleon with eyes in which the long dormant light of battle glinted.

Ballantyne snorted.

"Methinks she has still plenty of fight in her," he said. "Of the two vessels the *Prudent Mary* is in the worst way. That fire must be parlous near her magazine."

That the pirate was in very great danger was evinced by the volumes of black smoke which

was pouring out of her and by the consternation that appeared to reign aboard the vessel. The galleon, sluggishly rolling to leeward of her, was also afire at one point but, as the low sails of the *Happy Adventure* again caught the wind and the merchant slowly sailed toward *El Gran Grifon*, it was seen that the Spaniards had extinguished the blaze and now lay expectantly awaiting the on-coming merchantman.

Garry glanced up into the set face of the captain as he steered his vessel toward the immensely more powerful Spaniard and though he shivered with apprehension he could not but admire the desperate courage of the man in thus seeking a fight against such tremendous odds.

"Aye," responded Ballantyne grimly, in answer to the boy's observation. "'Tis a hopeless fight in which we are about to engage, but better to perish in battle than to be hunted down like rats by yon Spanish dogs. We cannot escape, and I misdoubt that the *Prudent Mary* can be counted a factor in the fight. A well-played shot might strike the Don in her magazine, and we have that small chance—if we lose we will be slain by the Spaniards without grace or ruth!"

The pirate ship was indeed no longer to be reckoned with as a factor in the battle. While the merchantman was still some distance from the galleon a great shout was heard from the

Prudent Mary and, while the horrified seamen aboard the *Happy Adventure* gazed at the doomed craft, the frantic forms of the frightened pirates could be seen leaping from her decks into the sea—then the ship disappeared behind a hurtling mass of smoke and flame above which spars, rigging, and other, more gruesome, objects shot into the air, and a detonation, which seemed to lift the *Happy Adventure* bodily from the water, shattered the calm midday.

A dreadful silence, punctuated by the spattering sound of things falling, followed the explosion and, for a space, nought could be heard save the flapping of the galleon's sails as she awaited the merchantman. But the crew of *El Gran Grifon* were stunned by the terrific force of the explosion, for the *Happy Adventure* sailed past the larger vessel within a boat's length before the Spaniards awakened to the fact that their prey was slipping away from them.

A desultory shot was fired after the English vessel which, taking advantage of this unlooked-for opportunity, sped away from her mighty antagonist as fast as her stunted sails could carry her. The *Happy Adventure* was miles down the coast and well out of gunshot range when *El Gran Grifon* finally took up the pursuit.

Even in her crippled condition the galleon could sail two miles to the Englishman's one,

and it was not long before a shot from *El Gran Grifon's* forward guns splashed alongside the merchantman and the desperate sailors aboard the *Happy Adventure* knew that their doom was sealed.

The shots came faster and had it not been for their execrable marksmanship the Spaniards would soon have sunk the English vessel. But one or two of their scattered shots told and, two hours after the explosion aboard the *Prudent Mary*, a chance shot decapitated the gallant old seaman, Captain Ballantyne. The ship was then headed toward the beach in the desperate hope that by grounding the vessel those aboard her might escape the Spaniards.

But a sunken reef of coral sadly interfered with their plans and dashed their mounting hopes. The *Happy Adventure* struck the reef with a sickening scrunch while yet a mile from shore and, as she lay helplessly aground, *El Gran Grifon* poured a hurricane of shot into her quivering hulk that well-nigh rent the vessel in twain. For a while the guns of the stranded ship returned the fire but, one by one, they ceased their clamour and at last one of the sailors, in desperation, came up from below with a white flag which he frantically waved from the stern of the vessel.

The Spanish fire slackened and died, and *El Gran Grifon* hove to and cast anchor. A

boat was lowered from her splintered side and moved slowly across the water toward the *Happy Adventure*. Under the direction of the master's-mate of the merchantman, a ladder was lowered down the side toward which the Spaniard approached.

A tall, elegantly-dressed man stood in the stern of the small boat eyeing his battered prize with scornful gaze. He was evidently a person of authority for great deference was paid him when at last the small boat scraped against the side of the merchantman and he was assisted up the ladder.

It was a sullen little group that welcomed the Spaniard when he trod the *Happy Adventure's* splintered deck. The stranger, garbed in handsome clothes, from his wide, bell-cuffed boots, to the spotless white plume in his wide-brimmed hat, gazed arrogantly upon the men who stood before him.

"Your captain?" he demanded in perfect English.

"—lies yonder," replied the master's-mate, indicating the headless body of Ballantyne with a motion of his hand.

The Spaniard walked daintily over the deck toward the spot where lay the corpse and he gazed down upon it with interest for a moment.

"Who now is in authority aboard this ship?" he asked as he straightened up.

The master's-mate looked uncertainly toward Sir Howard before replying to this question.

"I am the ranking seaman aboard the *Happy Adventure*," he hesitantly stated, "but—but——"

"I will conduct negotiations for the surrender of this vessel, sir," quoth the old knight with dignity, "I, Sir Howard Manvers, at your service."

The Spaniard swept off his hat with a flourish and bowed low.

"And I, Alonzo Quesada y Perez, captain of the galleon, *El Gran Grifon*, am your humble servant."

He replaced his hat and again addressed Sir Howard.

"An' it please you, Sir Knight," he said, "I would that you assemble your entire crew—and passengers—on deck."

"Will you grant us quarter?" bluntly asked the master's-mate.

Don Alonzo Quesada y Perez frowned upon the speaker and then smilingly addressed Sir Howard again.

"On the word of a Spanish gentleman, Sir Knight," he said suavely, "you will suffer no scathe."

The master's-mate grunted cynically.

During the mustering of the crew three boatloads of soldiers arrived from the galleon and

as the sullen English sailors formed up in two lines they gazed scornfully, but with ill-concealed curiosity, at the swarthy soldiers who stared back at them.

Garry meanwhile had hurried back with Sir Howard to the cabins in which the passengers were huddled and as Joan passed him, on her way to the deck, their hands crept unobserved together in tender embrace. The women and children took their places behind the two lines of sailors, and as this unexpected assemblage appeared on deck, the eyes of the Spaniards opened in surprise.

Don Alonzo glanced appraisingly from face to face as the women passed him and when Joan appeared he gave a gasp of admiration as he noted her rare beauty, and when Sir Howard again came on deck he began profusely to apologise for the peril in which the shots from *El Gran Grifon* had placed the women of the *Happy Adventure*.

Sir Howard shrugged his shoulders, and Garry, who followed close behind, gazed suspiciously at the Spaniard.

"It grieves me to think that my gallant Spanish gunners were unwittingly putting in danger so delicate and fragile a cargo," he said, eyeing Joan with such fervour as to cause that young lady intense embarrassment. "Yon fair damozel"—he indicated Joan with a nod of the

head—"is much too dainty a wench to suffer imprisonment in such rude quarters."

"Sirrah!" exclaimed Sir Howard angrily. "You are speaking of my wife!"

The Spaniard looked with startled unbelief into the wrinkled features of the Englishman. Then he noted the look of anger which had blazed in Garry's eyes and he bowed to the older man.

"Ah," he purred, recovering himself, "you are indeed to be felicitated, Sir Knight." A sardonic smile illumined his clear-cut features as he looked toward Garry and he slyly sneered as he bowed himself away and gave whispered orders to an officer who had accompanied him aboard the vessel. Immediately the Spanish soldiers scattered about the ship in strategic positions while a small guard of about half a score of men was left at the ladder-head.

"The ladies will please to leave this ship," cried Don Alonzo when the soldiers had been placed to his liking. Then, as the women hesitated, "Be not afraid," he counselled, "no harm will befall you and I can assure you that your quarters aboard *El Gran Grifon* will be far more comfortable than those to which you have been accustomed aboard this scurvy vessel."

No move was made by the frightened women to take advantage of his offer and, as they stood in huddled indecision, two soldiers advanced

and forcibly dragged a whimpering girl to the side of the ship.

This was more than Garry Graeme could stand and he stepped forward in angry remonstrance, but the sight of a long Spanish dirk pointed menacingly at his midriff caused him to reconsider his hasty impulse and he drew back from the grinning ruffian who flourished the weapon.

“You are young—and handsome, fair sir,” adjured Don Alonzo, who had observed the action, and he smiled knowingly toward Joan Manvers. “If you value your life pray refrain from any further untoward demonstration. My sailors have little cause this day to feel kindly toward an Englishman; but be not alarmed for the safety of these ladies—their protection is my honoured responsibility.”

And the struggling maiden was dragged forth—with over the side of the vessel and lightly lowered to a waiting boat.

One by one the white-faced women and girls were placed in the little craft, but when the first child was hurried to the rail one of the attendant sailors seized it roughly and forcibly took it from its mother. As the terrified and fainting woman was pulled rudely toward the ladder, Don Alonzo gave an order which was not audible to the muttering Englishmen, and the child was restored to its frantic parent. The remaining children, four in all, were

allowed to accompany their mothers, and soon every woman but Joan Manvers was in the tossing little boat.

"An it please you, my lady," suggested Quesada suavely, smiling toward Joan and indicating the ship's ladder.

"I prefer to remain with my husband," was the cold and haughty answer, though Garry noted that a slight tremor shook her voice.

"Sir Howard will join you later," was the reply, and a baleful light gleamed in the Spaniard's eyes. "Come, my lady, the boat is waiting."

Two sailors approached her and Garry stepped in front of the maiden.

"Nay, Master Graeme," remonstrated the old knight, stepping out beside the younger man. "It is my privilege to defend my wife." He moved with dignity and smiled upon the boy with kindly eyes.

"But, sir——" remonstrated Garry, but he was checked by the gentle voice of his beloved.

"Pray place yourselves in no danger on my account," pleaded Joan, and she stepped between the two men. "I have changed my mind—that is *my* privilege," she smiled sadly, "and I will do as our host has suggested."

Without further word to the two men she walked over to Quesada, who gallantly took her proffered hand and escorted her to the ship's rail. Gruffly ordering his sailors out of the

way, the Spaniard assisted the girl down the ladder and, when he had seen her comfortably placed in the little boat, he returned to the deck.

His glance travelled to the stern of the ship where, trussed by a great rope, lay the solitary craft that was left the *Happy Adventure* after the great storm.

“ You will lower that boat,” he commanded, addressing the master’s-mate, “ and pick from among your crew half a score of able seamen. The rest of you,” he continued, looking craftily at Sir Howard and his young companion, “ will remain aboard this vessel until I can safely send you elsewhere.”

The English sailors, for the most part, stood in their lines, but a craven few surrounded the master’s-mate and begged to be allowed man the small boat. With an imperious motion of his arm the mate ordered these men to loosen and lower the boat and as the last of the Spaniards was descending the rope ladder the merchantman’s boat rounded the stern of the *Happy Adventure* and made for *El Gran Grifon*.

Garry Graeme and Sir Howard Manvers had not moved from their positions at the head of the line of sailors, and they stood with folded arms as Quesada mockingly bowed to them and disappeared over the ship’s rail, nor did they acknowledge his parting salutation.

“ Think you that we will be left to starve on

this ship ? ” asked Garry uneasily as he watched the line of boats approach the high side of the galleon. “ The poor wounded wretches below are crying for water—and the last drop has been spilled out of the butts by the Spaniards’ fire.”

Sir Howard shook his head, but he did not reply. Garry knew that his thoughts were with his lady and he, though he like to have bit his tongue with anxiety for the safety of his beloved, could not but sympathise with him.

“ Quesada said that—that he would be responsible for her safety,” he ventured at last, and Sir Howard turned a listless eye upon him.

“ The word of a Spaniard is valueless,” he said wearily, and his old limbs shook so that he was hard put to remain upon his feet. Garry stepped over to the older man’s side and tenderly placed an arm about his shoulders. A tear dropped down his cheek, and it was not entirely for sympathy with Sir Howard that this unseemly emotion affected him.

The other glanced up into Garry’s face and he smiled understanding.

“ You love her, too, my boy,” he said. “ Nay, do not deny it—’tis an open secret, and I have known of your affection for Joan ever since you returned to your Scottish hills.”

Sir Howard studied Garry under raised brows, and he frowned perplexedly.

“ Are you not a Papist ? ” he asked suddenly.

“Are you not a member of the Roman Church?”

Garry defiantly nodded his head.

“Aye,” he said doggedly, “else I could not have resided in Spain as I did after Worcester. But I love Joan none the less for that—she was a Catholic before she married you.”

Manvers drew himself away from the young Scot and carefully studied him. About the two men the anxious sailors walked, and they talked in little nervous groups the while they speculated as to the fate that was in store for them. The boats had all been hoisted aboard the galleon, with the exception of the one that belonged to the *Happy Adventure*. This boat had been cast adrift and now bobbed lightly on the waves as it slowly drifted toward shore.

“How now!” ejaculated Sir Howard Manvers at last, after intently regarding his young rival for a space. “Why did you not crave protection of Quesada on account of your faith and go with her? You would have saved your skin—you would have accompanied your love, and”—he laughed bitterly—“you would have been spared the obtrusive presence of Joan’s useless old husband. Tell me, why did you stay?”

Garry flushed.

“I could not go,” he said, “and leave you sore distressed with jealousy of me. Besides, I am a Scotsman and no man of my race would desert his friends in time of peril.”

“And you consider me your friend?” mused Sir Howard wonderingly. “I, who fought in the English Army which defeated the Scots at Worcester; who ruled as a conqueror over your sequestered estates; and who finally married the lady of your choice!”

The boy bit his lip as he gazed toward the galleon.

“I am a Scotsman,” he repeated.

“Than whom exists no more courageous a people,” declared Manvers warmly. “And I misdoubt you’ll need all your courage before long, my boy. Yon Spaniard is about to blow this vessel to pieces!”

And it would seem that such was indeed the case. The galleon slowly moved along behind the stern of the *Happy Adventure* and her sails were hoisted into position. With her gun-ports uncovered and the black muzzles of nearly three-score cannon pointed toward them, the grimly waiting Englishmen fully expected each moment to hear the crash of her broadside and, when two small culverins, mounted on the deck, suddenly opened fire, every man’s head was instinctively lowered.

But the Spaniard was not firing at the *Happy Adventure*. The small ship’s boat, idly drifting toward the shore, was the target upon which *El Gran Grifon’s* ammunition was being expended. But, as the galleon got farther and

farther away, her shots became wilder and finally ceased altogether without having inflicted any damage upon the tiny boat which merrily bobbed its way shorewards.

When it was realised that *El Gran Grifon* was leaving them to their fate and was sailing away a hoarse sigh of anguish arose from those men whose wives and children had been taken aboard the Spaniard. Sir Howard gazed after the ship, white-faced and dry-eyed, and he raised his clenched fists toward heaven as he called down curse after curse upon the devils who had robbed him of his bride.

Garry closed his eyes in agony, but he made no sound. Around him men were cursing and crying, while those who had not been despoiled stood in silent groups gazing after the fast-disappearing galleon.

"She will be making for Santo Domingo," said one, spitting scornfully over the side. "The Dons will sing a *Te Deum* to-morrow over to-day's work."

"Gramercy!" exclaimed another. "I would have sold my life for a silver groat an hour ago; now there is nought to hinder us from swimming ashore and living like princes."

"Nought to hinder us from swimming ashore?" repeated the first. "Stupid lout! Thinkest thou that yon great fish would have nought to say in the matter?"

He pointed to the shimmering water where, like black logs sunk just beneath the surface, several dark, sinister shapes slowly patrolled the vessel. Occasionally one of the sharks would rise as though to get a closer view of his intended victims, and at such times the sharp edge of his triangular dorsal fin would cleave the surface.

“At least there is a chance that Admiral Penn may yet pick us off this wreck,” said Garry to Sir Howard a short time later as the two men stared with straining eyes at the distant white speck that was *El Gran Grifon*.

Manvers shuddered.

“I do not understand it,” he said. “It is not like the Dons to spare their enemies in this fashion. I mistrust the dogs!”

But his wonder was changed to enlightenment, and his enlightenment to alarm a short time later when one of the men who had gone below to attend the wounded came bursting out on deck again, his eyes dilated with fear.

“Good lack!” he cried. “The ship’s afire! God help us! God help us!”

Garry sprang quickly to his feet and looked toward the open doorway from which the alarmed man had leaped, but he could see no sign of smoke. He remembered that he had several times noticed a distinctly pungent and acrid odour since the galleon had left them, and

he had attributed it to stray wisps of smoke from the guns of *El Gran Grifon* and had so dismissed the trivial matter from his mind. Now, as he entered the doorway, he smelled again the odour that had made itself noticeable some time before and, as he descended the stairway which led from the covered forecastle to the deck below, the smell of smoke became unmistakable.

The gun deck was a shambles. Here, between the infrequent cannon, had been stored the water-butts and personal articles belonging to the crew, and here the crew had slept, gamed, and manned their guns, and here a score of the gallant fellows had met their death in the destruction that had been wrought by the guns of *El Gran Grifon*.

But it was not the sight of the dismembered bodies, nor the weakening cries of the wounded that engaged Garry's attention. He ran hastily aft, making his way as best he could over the hideous débris that strewed his path and, arriving at the after-bulkhead, he flung open a door from which a grey wisp of smoke was stealing, and then staggered back as a roaring volume of smoke and flame leaped out at him.

The Spaniards had set the ship afire before abandoning her crew to their fate !

THE sudden crash of guns from directly overhead roused Joan from the stupor into which she had fallen. She rose from the couch upon which she had sunk and walked over to the ornately decorated port of Quesada's cabin to see what this fresh disturbance might portend. The sight of the small boat, dancing upon the shimmering sea, surrounded by spouting geysers of water where the shots were splashing, reassured her, for she feared that the Spaniards might be up to some more of their deviltry—and the thought of her husband, and of her lover, was ever before her.

Puzzled somewhat by the Spaniard's actions, but too much overwrought to give it much thought, Joan stumbled back to the couch and wearily threw herself down upon it. When Quesada had led her directly to this room and had bade her rest, she was much too exhausted by the recent momentous turn of events to do other than obey and, though Sir Howard—and Garry—had been left aboard the *Happy Adventure*, she had not the slightest doubt that they would follow later—for had not Don Alonzo so assured her?

Where the other English women had been

taken Joan had not the vaguest idea, nor did she care overmuch at the present moment. Suffice it that she was alone and unmolested, for she was tired—so tired——

The English captives had been much impressed by the size and magnificence of the Spanish galleon and even Joan herself, despite her perturbation, had looked with interest upon her bloodied decks.

El Gran Grifon was a tremendous vessel—larger far than any ship flying the English flag—and the ornate richness of her fittings, the marvellously carved rails and gorgeously-painted decks and masts, aroused in the captive Englishmen awed expressions of reluctant admiration. The effect was marred somewhat, to be sure, by the ghastly signs of recent battle; the quiet forms which lay scattered about the deck, and over each of which in turn a priest, accompanied by two richly-dressed acolytes, bent and muttered a prayer; the shattered and furrowed decks; the charred and blackened deck-houses where the fire had raged.

The master's mate and his frightened band of compatriots were chained together and, grouped about the base of the shattered mast, they stood, looking defiantly at the circle of hostile and jeering Spaniards who surrounded them, as Joan was courteously led aft to his own luxurious apartments by Quesada.

Here the Spaniard had left her, after assuring her that the cabin was her own and that she would not be disturbed, and he had then closed the door and retired. The beauty and richness of the captain's quarters were not lost upon the anxious maiden, and her eyes opened ever wider in wonder as she gazed upon the gold and silver ornaments, the rich rugs and tapestries, and the marvellous and intricate carvings with which every article of furniture was covered. These rooms had suffered little damage from the *Prudent Mary's* bombardment though, upon the polished mahogany floor of the main cabin, several fragile dishes lay in scattered fragments—due, no doubt, to the concussion of the guns and to the tremendous shock of the pirate's broadsides. Such sybaritic luxury as this had never before been experienced by Joan and, as she lay upon the silken coverlets of the gilded couch, the comforting thought impressed itself upon her that the man who could appreciate beauty such as this could not be cruel to his helpless enemies.

Long the maiden lay in uneasy slumber, the while the noises of the ship sounded drowsily in her ear and, blended with the fanciful creations of her dreams, rose and fell in delirious cadences of sound—now dying away to a dull murmur; now rising in a crescendo of high-pitched music. To her disordered fancy the

voices of men chanting sounded ever more distinct upon her ears, and she awoke with a shudder to the realisation that it was not a dream—that from some distant part of the vessel, men's voices were raised in song.

She opened her eyes and gazed up at the low, lavishly-carved panels of the ceiling, endeavouring to collect her scattered wits. A dull presentiment of danger—of some evil that menaced her—pressed down upon her as a burden and she shivered with fear. Her eyes, following the delicate traceries above her, felt drawn toward a distant corner of the room and she half shuddered as she looked in that direction. Out of the dim obscurity a figure slowly assumed form, and she gasped as she looked into the smiling eyes of Don Alonzo Quesada y Perez.

“Ah,” said the Spaniard, rising and looking down at the apprehensive girl. “The little English rose has uncurled its petals. Truly this is the proper setting for so delicate a flower!”

Joan sat up on the side of the couch, her nervous hands pressed against her cheeks.

“My husband,” she whispered. “Is he yet aboard?”

Quesada laughed.

“Your husband, *queridísima*, is much too old for such a luscious young bud. I am desolate that, through some inadvertence, he was left aboard the English vessel—as was the

young men who dared to look upon you with amorous gaze. But come, let us drink to the further success of our cruise—drink, as the priests already chant their thanks for the magnificent victory which the Blessed Virgin has vouchsafed our gallant vessel.”

Joan sprang from the bed, knocking from the man’s outstretched hand the crystal goblet of wine which he had been holding out toward her. She hurried to the open port and looked frantically out to where the *Happy Adventure* had lain—but only a distant smudge of smoke, the vast expanse of sea, and a glimpse of far-off shore rewarded her efforts.

“The ship—the *Happy Adventure*!” she gasped. “Where is it?”

Quesada advanced toward her, laughing as he wiped the wine from his satin breeches with a silken handkerchief.

“Nay, my impetuous young wildcat! Your husband’s ship is many leagues behind us. He will trouble us no more——”

“You mean——?” she asked in a horrified whisper. “You mean that you have sailed away and left him?”

She stared incredulously into the gloating face of Quesada.

He nodded, and he looked upon the girl with an expression that chilled her heart.

“He is probably dead by this time,” he said.

"We set the ship afire before we left. But come—I will give you a love such as that old man could never lavish upon you. He was no fit mate for so ravishing a creature."

Joan still stared upon him with unbelief written in her eyes.

"You—you animal!" she gasped. Then she caught her breath and laughed scornfully.

"My husband and his friends will swim ashore," she said. "The English Fleet——"

"The English Fleet will avail them nothing," retorted the Spaniard. "As for your husband's chances of swimming ashore——"

He walked to the door, opened it, and gave a whispered command to a soldier who stood without. This done, he closed the door, bolted it again and rejoined the girl.

"You will see in a moment why your husband—and your *other* friends, will never reach the shore."

Joan said nothing further, but a dread fascination compelled her to rivet her gaze upon the wake of *El Gran Grifon*. Came a piercing shriek from overhead, a dark object splashed into the sea behind them and then, as her eyes opened wider in horror, the pitifully struggling body of one of the English sailors came to the surface, waved impotent arms in dumb helplessness, and disappeared in a convulsion of the waters, above which for a moment

the black, pointed snout of a shark showed itself.

“That,” said Quesada, as Joan grasped the lintel of the window for support “is what will happen to Sir Howard Manvers should he attempt to swim to shore!”

The room reeled before her; a sudden nausea overswept her as Joan weakly collapsed into a chair.

“Fiend! Fiend!” she whispered; then she felt herself seized in the man’s arms and, as her senses left her, she felt Quesada’s lips on hers in passionate embrace—she felt herself lifted—and knew no more.

It was dark, and the ship was rolling when at length Joan recovered consciousness. For a long time she lay, reclining upon the softest bed upon which she had ever lain, watching the steady swaying of the ship’s rush-lantern which hung, on a long golden chain, from the ceiling.

No sound disturbed the stillness of the night and, as before, Joan racked her tired brain in an endeavour to reconstruct the circumstances which had brought her where she was. Her curious gaze wandered about the room, a smaller apartment than the one of which she had recollection, and she noted the same richness of decoration which had distinguished the other. The same quaint carvings, the tapestries and rugs, the golden vessels which gleamed richly

from the walls in the mellow flicker of the lantern—and she shivered.

Horrible misgivings smote her as she sat up in bed and took cognisance of the beauty and texture of the crumpled coverings upon which she was lying. Then she screamed in sudden horror as she realised that she lay naked upon the scented sheets.

A figure arose from a darkened corner of the apartment and approached her, and Joan shrank back upon the bed and covered her terrified features with her arms ; but the sound of a woman's voice—a grotesque muttering—reassured her and she tremblingly lifted her face and gazed into the solicitous eyes of a young negress.

“How came I here ?” demanded the girl, seizing one of the black hands in anguished grasp. “Tell me that Quesada did not——!”

The negress shook her head and patted the white girl's hand. She pointed to herself and then to Joan and muttered incoherently.

“Did you remove my clothes ?” she breathlessly asked. “Did you put me in this bed ?”

The other smilingly nodded her head and Joan sank back, crying weakly in the sudden relaxation of her fears.

“Where is Quesada ?” she demanded of the black woman.

The negress, kneeling beside the silken couch, smiled sadly and shook her head.

“ Please speak to me,” pleaded Joan. “ Tell me—where is Don Alonzo Quesada ? ”

The black woman made a pitiful attempt to answer the girl but the sounds she made were unintelligible, and Joan shivered as she realised that the unfortunate creature had no tongue.

“ Ah, forgive me,” she said in sudden pity, and she was silent for a space while the large brown eyes of the negress gazed wonderingly upon this strange, beautiful, fair-haired creature.

The room was filled with the odour of incense—a soft, sensuous, cloying aroma which proceeded from the corner of the room in which the black had been sitting when Joan awoke. A thin, curling tendril of smoke from that quarter gave evidence of the spot from which it emanated. Above the bed an open port looked out into the night and on the fresh evening breeze the odour of palms and flowers, of coral beaches and dense, dank vegetation—the unmistakable scent of the tropics—entered the room and mingled its fresher fragrance with that from the censer.

The negress remained where she was, squatted beside the bed, and the galleon rolled on. All was quiet on the vessel, and no sound could be heard save the muffled laughter of men and the occasional agonised cry from some sorely wounded wretch.

Joan kneeled on her couch and looked out of the port toward the distant shore of Hispaniola. Piercing the ebon blackness was a small cluster of lights which she rightly opined to be those of a Spanish settlement on the Caribbean and, closer at hand, where the overlapping wave broke musically against the side of the vessel, long streaks of phosphorescence trailed interminably behind her. She buried her face in her hands as the crushing realisation of her plight came back to her with sudden force and she collapsed upon the bed, sobbing in anguish, while the soft black fingers of her companion stroked her heaving body in silent sympathy.

And then she slept—and when she awoke the light of day streamed in through the open port and the lantern had been extinguished. Of the black woman she saw no trace, but as she lay, watching the play of reflected water-traceries on the ceiling, the door opened and the woman appeared with an appetising breakfast, tastefully arranged, upon a tray of beaten gold.

“Good morrow,” said Joan to the smiling negress and, while she refreshed herself upon the dainty viands cooked for her pleasure, she managed, by intelligent questioning and adroit perception of the eloquent signs employed by the dumb girl, to learn something of her history.

It was not much that she learned. The

negress had been mutilated by the Spaniards what time she had been taken captive from an English vessel, where she had been the servant of an English lady. On being questioned as to the fate of her mistress the negress had burst into tears and Joan could learn nothing further from the grief-stricken girl. Unlettered was the slave, as indeed were most whites of that period, and by nothing that Joan was able to suggest could she learn more of the woman's history. Her pitiful attempt to pronounce her name when the white girl asked it availed nothing, and Joan speedily forebore from questioning her further.

When the dishes had been cleared away the black woman returned with Joan's clothes and the girl speedily dressed, fearful that Quesada might appear before she was properly clothed. She had barely made herself presentable when the Spaniard knocked at her door and, at his request, the girl walked past him into the larger apartment.

"I trust your slumbers were undisturbed, señora," said Quesada, smiling in an ingratiating manner upon the girl, "and that the black wench, Agatha, has served you well."

Joan did not deign to notice the man. She walked over toward the door leading in from the deck and she bit her lip with vexation as she discovered that it was locked.

Quesada chuckled softly to himself, and he threw himself down into a wide-armed chair, smilingly regarding the frightened and indignant girl.

“Mayhap you thought Agatha unduly taciturn,” he hinted, and his smile was a mask that covered the real cruelty of his expression. “It may be that you have discovered the reason for her reticence.” He eyed her critically.

Joan clung to the handle of the door and leaned weakly against it.

“Agatha was the slave of a young Virginian,” continued the Spaniard. “Their ship was wrecked upon the coast of Cuba and, by the grace of God, into my hands fell the beautiful Mary Hampden, her husband, and the slave woman whose mistress you now are. Master Benjamin Hampden died—painfully. The black wench, Agatha, grieved so for her master that I felt constrained to order her tongue plucked out—else I would never have heard the end of her lamentations.”

Joan’s eyes blazed a hatred that Quesada appeared to find amusing.

“But Mary Hampden never learned to love me.” The Spaniard sighed profoundly. “Even though I honoured her by making her my mistress. She was cold, and I tired of her sad looks—I gave her one night to my sailors.”

He sighed again.

“She died before morning.”

The staring face of the girl was flecked with colour as she regarded the smiling Spaniard with horrified fascination. She pressed herself away from the door and walked with steady steps toward him, and then stopped. Quesada looked up into her hard-drawn eyes as she attempted in vain to speak, then, as she started toward the door of her bed-chamber, he seized her hand and swung her sharply around so that she faced him again.

“Why dost thou look so sternly upon me?” he whispered, looking at her through half-closed lids. “I wish a return for the kisses I so lavishly bestowed upon thee yestere’en. Within the hour we stop off Santo Domingo de Guzmán, and there I am sending ashore those misguided wretches who accompanied thee from the English ship.”

Joan shivered with disgust and fear at the familiar turn his speech had taken, but she remained standing, unresistant, while Quesada devoured her with lascivious eyes.

“We sail from Santo Domingo City to San Juan Bautista, on the island of Puerto Rico where I have an estate. *El Gran Grifon* is in dire need of repair and there she will remain for the space of several weeks. When we resume our voyage this afternoon I am coming back to thee and will expect thee to give me

unstintedly of thy love ; if thou'rt still obdurate—well—the women who came aboard this ship with thee were very few, and the soldiers on the galleon are many ! ”

Still holding Joan's icy hand in his firm grip, Quesada arose, drew her to him and, with a laugh, lightly kissed her fingers. Joan opened her eyes in time to see him disappear through the door that led to the deck.

The galleon anchored before the city of Santo de Guzmán, and Joan looked out of the port upon its massive walls and strongly-built houses as *El Gran Grifon* slowly swung on her cable. The city was at that time possibly the most important Spanish settlement in the new world, and though it had been captured by Drake some seventy years before, it was now, with the possible exception of the French stronghold of Quebec, the most strongly fortified position on the western side of the Atlantic, not because of its natural advantages, which were not to be despised, but by reason of its massive walls and the number of cannon by which it was defended.

To the east of the city flowed the muddy Ozama, its turbid waters alive with small boats which hastened out toward the waiting galleon and, as Joan gazed across the river toward the higher bluffs on the eastern side, she shuddered as she saw the rotting forms of dead men swinging from a multitude of gibbets.

In one of the small boats that came from the shore Quesada left to pay his respects to the Governor. Between this gentleman and the captain of the galleon there was little love lost, for the Governor was, by virtue of his position as chief civil and military functionary in this part of America, and by the further fact that he was a titled grandee of Spain, a man of considerably more authority than the well-born captain of *El Gran Grifon*—and Quesada resented the overlordship of Bernardino de Menestes y Bracamonte, Count of Peñalva, Governor and Captain-General. Nevertheless Quesada, resplendent in a uniform which he fondly hoped would put to blush that worn by Peñalva, set forth for the city, and Joan watched him go with eyes that blazed their hatred and contempt.

She saw, with sinking heart, the ten remaining survivors of the *Happy Adventure's* crew being rowed toward the city in one of the galleon's boats, and she could not restrain her tears as she saw three of her countrywomen in a boat that slowly glided past the stern of the galleon, half senseless from shame and exhaustion as they reclined in the brawny arms of the Spanish sailors. Of the children who had come aboard *El Gran Grifon* she saw no trace.

Quesada had been gone two hours when the boat in which he had left the galleon was seen to put out from the landing. When the craft

had covered half the distance between the shore and the galleon it was seen that the captain was accompanied by Peñalva, and great activity burst forth upon the splintered decks of the ship. Joan was mightily alarmed by the sudden outburst of sound and she wondered what it might portend. As she stood in the centre of the apartment in which Quesada had left her, the door was suddenly flung open and the desperately-struggling Agatha was flung into the room and the door was closed again.

The negress rose to her knees and jabbered unintelligibly at her new mistress, but Joan could make nothing of what she was trying to tell her.

"I understand thee not, poor child," she sadly said, gazing down in pity upon the up-raised face of the black woman, and she patted the slave's trembling shoulders as she waited for what might be about to happen.

She had not long to wait.

There floated up through the ship a confused murmur, punctuated by the sharp shouts of commanding voices, a trumpet sounded, and a sudden silence reigned.

Footsteps hurriedly approached the door; it flew open and Quesada appeared.

"Into the other room—both of you!" he whispered tensely, looking sidewise out of his eyes toward the deck, from which direction could be heard other people approaching.

Agatha rose to her feet and started toward the little chamber, followed in a more leisurely fashion by Joan Manvers, the while Quesada fretted with impatience. The two women had barely stepped inside the bed-chamber when the door was slammed shut behind them and the sound of voices was heard in the larger apartment.

The talk was in Spanish and Joan could make nothing of it ; but Agatha, her ear glued to the door, seemed greatly interested in what she heard.

“ The pirate did more than shew his teeth at you, Don Alonzo ! ” exclaimed Peñalva as he entered the room. “ The damage done you is more extensive than appears from the shore. But, Ave Marie, Quesada ! ” he exclaimed as his eyes took in the luxurious appointments of the cabin. “ What a beautiful apartment this is, to be sure ! ”

Quesada acknowledged the compliment with a gesture.

“ Your Excellency is most kind,” he murmured. “ Pray consider this humble cabin and all it contains as yours.”

Peñalva bowed, and the amenities having been observed, he seated himself. Quesada sat opposite him and refreshments were served the two officers.

The younger man raised his goblet and drank with the Governor. His nervous eyes wandered

continually toward the door behind which the black mute was listening, but Peñalva did not appear to notice his preoccupation.

“Those women were a sorry lot of wenches,” he observed. “I trust you did not keep the pick of the birds for yourself, Quesada?”

The captain was voluble in his protestations that he had sent all his captives ashore.

The Governor chuckled.

“You have the reputation of being very careless with your women captives, Don Alonzo,” he drily retorted. “Think carefully—are you sure that you sent every white woman ashore?”

Quesada nodded nervously, for the eyes of the Governor bored into his as he questioned his subordinate.

“Why should I lie?” he protested weakly. “There are plenty of women in Habana—in San Juan——”

Peñalva regarded the man amusedly.

“Tut, tut! I was but chaffing you, Quesada. Let us talk of other matters,” he said.

And to Don Alonzo’s great relief the Governor chatted loquaciously on other things and he flattered himself that his secret would be undiscovered.

But Agatha, who understood the language they were speaking, and to whom the opportunity appeared providential, rose to her feet and opened the door.

Peñalva's conversation came to an abrupt conclusion as he stared in amazement at the golden-haired beauty who stood within the smaller apartment, framed by the gilt casing of the door. He stared in amaze at the girl and then turned his wondering eyes upon the white-faced Quesada.

"You were wise, Alonzo," he said with enthusiasm, "to shelter this beautiful creature until I should visit you. I presume that you intended her as a surprise—as a gift to me?"

He smiled mockingly at Quesada, and that worthy was quick to bow his assent. His lips twitched nervously and sweat beaded his forehead—for Peñalva had the power to send him back to Spain, a broken man.

"'Tis well that such is the case," continued the Governor. "It would have grieved me to have had you act false toward me. But come," he said, rising to his feet. "It grows late, and I am sure that you are anxious to resume your voyage to Puerto Rico. I will take the English-woman with me."

He bowed to Joan and indicated with a movement of his hand that she precede him. Without so much as deigning Quesada a look the girl walked haughtily past him, her heart beating happily for the strange turn events had taken, and, followed by the shrinking Agatha, she left the room.

Quesada seized the black woman fiercely by the shoulder as she passed him and he would have detained her had not Peñálva observed the action.

“Nay, Alonzo,” he said in rebuke. “Let the wench accompany her mistress. I am surprised that you should attempt to detain her,” with assumed choler. “There are plenty of women in Habana—in San Juan——”

And, to the accompaniment of a flourish of trumpets, Señor Don Bernardino de Menestes y Bracamonte, Count of Peñálva, Governor and Captain-General of la Española, assisted his fair companion into the tossing boat.

IV

Castaways

THERE was a moment of panic when Garry returned to the deck with the disquieting confirmation of the sailor’s alarming report, but cool heads prevailed and every one turned to in an endeavour to smother the fire before it should get beyond control.

For a time the blaze was confined to the cabin in which it had originated but, for all their efforts, the gun-deck soon filled with thick, smothering smoke and the sailors were driven, gasping, into the outer air. By this time the smoke was curling up from the cracks between

the deck planks, and around the closed cargo hatch the planking was so hot that the bare-footed sailors could not walk thereabouts. They could do nothing—the ship was doomed, and Garry called the men together on the main deck.

There was but one thing to be done, he told them, and that was to rip the upper works to pieces and to make rafts of the wood so collected. It would be almost hopeless, he said, to try to swim ashore—several seamen glanced overboard at the waiting sharks and shuddered—and so, without further delay, the sailors energetically attacked the wooden decks and cabins, and the after part of the *Happy Adventure* was soon a hive of industry.

Sir Howard Manvers, oblivious to the peril in which the vessel lay, had sat all this time upon a hatch cover, his head buried in his arms, taking no notice of what was going on around him. None of the sailors questioned Garry's right to take command of affairs upon his young shoulders, nor did Garry himself stop to consider the matter at all. He walked over to where the piteous figure of the old knight sat, as though to rouse him to a realisation of their danger but, as he observed that the thin old shoulders were shaken with sobs, he desisted and was soon busily engaged in the manufacture of a small raft.

The wounded had all been carried to the deck and placed in the shade of a tarpaulin at

the after-end of the vessel and it was while Garry had taken a few moments off from his raft building to care for these men that the explosion occurred that settled the fate of the vessel.

Smoke had been pouring out of every hatch and companion-way in white clouds for the space of an hour, and the fire had eaten its way in long cracks through the bulkhead which separated the cargo hold from the gun-deck. Unfortunately for the success of their plans a small cask of gunpowder had been left beside the gun nearest the bulkhead and, when a tongue of flame licked the cask, an explosion resulted which tore down the already weakened wall and allowed the flames full sweep of the ship.

The sudden collapse of the bulkhead allowed the deck to sag at that spot and within a few minutes the whole forward end of the *Happy Adventure* was a whirling mass of flame, and so great was the heat from the fire that no man could stand before it. The would-be carpenters were forced to drop whatever they were doing and to congregate upon the stern of the vessel, while behind them the dried sails flared up and the pitch in the deck planking bubbled and smoked.

For a while the cabin in the after-part of the *Happy Adventure* gave the desperate men a protection from the roaring flames which already licked the cabin door, but before long its outer

walls started to burn and smoke poured in at the windows.

Escape by the deck was now impossible. Garry realised, with a pang, that only by the ports and windows of the overhanging stern could he and his hapless companions escape the doom that crept—nay, leaped—nearer and nearer. But under the windows was water, and in the water——!

Before he jumped Garry remembered that he had seen nothing of Sir Howard since the time he had left him sitting upon the hatch cover, and he impetuously decided to go to the old man's assistance. He frantically clawed at the casing of the window, but the press of maddened men behind him, seared by the already encroaching flames, tore loose his grasp and he hurtled rapidly down toward the waiting water.

His ears throbbing and his nostrils filled with the taste of the sea, Garry dived deeper. Above his head he could hear the roaring impact of human bodies striking the water and he swam some distance away from the vessel before he finally rose, gasping, to the surface. For the moment the fear of sharks had left him, and his eyes were all for the *Happy Adventure* and the miserable humans who were still pouring down from her stern. He saw that the smoke was now pouring out of the window from which he had jumped and he found time to

wonder if Sir Howard had managed to gain the shelter of the cabin before the flames reached him.

Between him and the ship were many men swimming—and, alas, several drowning. There was nothing that any man could do for the non-swimmers, no matter how proficient he might be in the water. The shore was upward of a mile away, and the reef, in its shallowest part, was much too far under water to permit of anyone standing thereon. The *Happy Adventure* was now a raging torrent of fire, a leaping cauldron of flame, from whose scarlet tongues the smoke billowed upwards in black, oily masses.

Above the crackling turmoil of the fire the voices of drowning men could be distinguished, and Garry shuddered as he heard, during a lull in the roaring of the flames, the cries of the wounded men on deck, who were slowly roasting to death. And then he was brought back with a shock to his own danger for, below him in the clear water, an amorphous, black object glided slowly past.

Garry beat frantically against the surface with his feet and hands and for a moment he was panic-stricken. But when he saw the white coral sand beneath him, and realised that the Thing had disappeared, he became calmer and he started toward the shore as fast as he could swim.

Land seemed very far away and he appeared to make little appreciable progress from the burning ship, but he outdistanced the majority of the seamen who were making for the shore, and he soon joined company with two others, who had left the ship before and who, with calm and steady strokes, bore rapidly away from all but the lithe young Scotsman.

Garry noted, every time he turned on his back and looked in the direction of the blazing merchantman, that the number of swimmers behind him was becoming less and, as he realised that more than exhaustion was taking toll of his companions, he almost sickened with fear. It was with numbed limbs that he at last drew near the shore, and he turned to his nearest companion to encourage the man to greater efforts when, with a shriek, the man suddenly disappeared beneath the water—and behind him the blue was changed to muddy red.

Scarce a boat length remained between him and the nearest curling breaker, and the other sailor, a black, began to whimper and to choke with fear and fatigue.

“No one lef’ but us, my master,” he panted. “Pray gib ol’ Bartholomew a hand—else he’ll never reach the shore!”

Much against his will, for he saw that the blackamoor spoke the truth and that the rest of the *Happy Adventure’s* crew had succumbed

to the perils of the sea, Garry turned on his back and gave the old negro a hand, propelling himself forward with his feet as he did so. But Bartholomew had hardly availed himself of the younger man's aid when Garry felt the hand roughly drawn from his own, and the negro's eyes bulged forward as his protesting body was drawn under.

A huge wave followed him and Garry swam as he had never swum in his life before to take advantage of the breaker's curving fall. He felt himself caught in the wave, thrown forward over its foamy crest, and then an avalanche of sand and water filled his ears and eyes, his head banged heavily on the bottom, and he was thrown a considerable distance up the shore. He was safe !

He lay where the surge had tossed him, and each succeeding wave tried, with forceful fingers, to drag him back into the sea. With an effort he scrambled away from their dragging clutch, above the foam-marked line of wet beach, and he tumbled heavily into the thicker, drier sand, and lay prostrate.

The sun went down, suddenly, as it does in those latitudes, and it was night ere Garry rose shakily to his feet and stared over the phosphorescent surges to where, a dull, red mass in the ocean, the *Happy Adventure* smouldered and hissed. His eyes were bloodshot and

inflamed, and the lids were salt-encrusted. He rubbed them with the backs of his hands, and he gazed out toward that distant glow and the tears welled in them so that he could see nothing, as he threw himself again down into the sand.

And as he slept the sails of a small, inquisitive Spanish vessel caught the rosy reflection of the dying fire, grew fainter as it passed along—and then merged into the blackness which swallowed it up.

A raging thirst consumed Garry Graeme, and he moaned and fretted as the hot morning sun beat down upon him. He rolled over in an effort to escape the pitiless rays, gasped—and sat up, inhaling deeply of the cool breeze that blew in from the sea. He rubbed his swollen eyes, looked out upon the empty ocean, and slowly rose to his feet.

Garry was hungry and thirsty—cruelly thirsty. He walked stiffly down to the water and laved his rough face with the cooling fluid, but the sight and touch of it only intensified his desire and he speedily arose and walked along the strand in search of a stream.

The beach, for miles on either side of the place he had landed was strewn with ashes and charred timbers, and of the *Happy Adventure* nought remained but a small black mound on the distant reef. There was no sight nor sound

of any other person and Garry shuddered as he realised that, of all the people who had manned the merchantman, he was undoubtedly the sole survivor.

But he had little time for retrospection. Other, more important matters demanded his attention and his very soul craved the boon of a cooling drink. He wandered up the beach, his feet occasionally splashing through the racing surges and, as he walked, his eyes were strained with the intensity with which he examined every depression along the shore for a possible source of fresh water.

He had been walking but a short time when, to his joy, he observed through the scrub and cactus which lined the bank above the high-water mark, the silvery gleam of a quiet pool. With a whoop of delight he raced through the dragging sand, burst through the cactus and threw himself down on his knees beside the pond and plunged his mouth into the sparkling water.

He withdrew his face with an expression of disgust, for the water in the little lake was saltier, if possible, than that of the ocean, and it was with disappointed steps that Garry retraced his path to the seashore.

But his disgust was short-lived. Not a mile further along the beach he discovered a tiny stream which flowed toward the sea from under the stringy roots of a tall palm. It was a

spring, and a small cluster of hills, a short distance back from the beach, gave evidence as to its origin.

The matter of food was one that perplexed him, and the boy was ravenous when, two days later, he stood before a strange plant and debated with himself whether he should risk the danger of poisoning himself by experimenting as to its edibility.

He had walked many miles and had not, since that first awful hour, suffered for lack of water. Little streams or springs abounded as the shore-line crept in toward the hills, and twice during the past two days he had had to cross sizeable rivers—and he did it with reluctance, for his experience in swimming ashore from the *Happy Adventure* had shaken his nerve.

He had eaten several shellfish and, in desperation, had even essayed to chew a piece of seaweed. But the tough, astringent stuff had burnt his mouth and he hurriedly spat it out. Now, as he stood before this strange, toothsome-looking plant, his mouth watered—for he was very hungry.

The tree stood about fifteen feet high and from its top hung clusters of leaves, of a magnitude that had caused Garry's eyes to open when first he looked upon them. These leaves were as long as his body and quite a foot broad. The stalk of this plant was smooth and shiny and

was marked with dark purple stripes and spots and appeared to be as soft and unresistant as human flesh, for Garry could easily tear strips of it from the living tree with his fingers. The fruit of this strange plant hung down from the centre of the tree in a massy cluster, and each fruit was golden as the orb of day.

Garry reached up and pulled one of the smooth-skinned fruits away from its stem and he placed it tentatively against his nostril—then he tasted the soft pulp which its golden skin enclosed, and he sighed with satisfaction as he swallowed large mouthfuls of the fruit. It was the first time that Garry had ever seen or tasted a banana; thereafter he had no occasion to go hungry for the banana and its close cousin, the plantain, grew in profusion along the shore.

It was the day after the discovery of the banana that Garry surmised that he was being followed.

He had made his way along the shore toward the east for the past three days—for it was in that direction that *El Gran Grifon* had sailed—and during that time he had seen no sign of any other human being. Twenty miles from the spot where the merchantman had been burned the shore curved abruptly to the left and Garry realised that if he wished to follow the galleon to wherever it was bound, he must of necessity

make a detour of the huge bay, or gulf, whose far shore could be indistinctly made out, ten leagues across the water.

For some time Garry had had an uneasy presentiment that others were on his trail. Though none of his known senses warned him that he was being shadowed, some uncanny instinct apprised him of danger and, shortly after he had turned to the north along the shore of the gulf, intuition gave place to certainty, and he resolved to cover his tracks as well as he could and to wait along the beach until his trackers should come into view.

He had disturbed, a while back, a large flock of parrots, who had risen, screaming, into the air and had only returned to their roost when Garry had walked a considerable distance along the beach. Now, as he looked over his shoulder, he saw the same flock rise in a scattered mass into the air, and, after a time, the distant sound of their screeching reached his ears.

His trail in the sand was distinct and easy to follow—indeed, all his pursuers had to do was to continue along the beach. Garry walked along the shore until he came to a small stream which ran across the beach into the sea. Here he seated himself, removed his shoes, and walked up the pebbly bed of the brook until he had penetrated a considerable distance into the forest. At a certain point he came out, being

careful to leave no trail by which the spot might be noticed and, donning his footwear, he walked hastily back along the edge of the forest, well up from the sand, until his vigilance was rewarded by the sight of two figures walking along the beach toward him !

He lay down behind a thick bush, through whose roots he could see the whole stretch of sand between his hiding spot and the place at which he had entered the little stream and, with his chin supported by his hands, he breathlessly awaited the appearance of his pursuers.

With their eyes intent upon the path ahead, the two men passed his retreat and Garry became thoughtful at sight of them. Desperate-looking characters, and armed with cruel weapons, the young man knew that they would prove formidable opponents if their designs were hostile—and he had no reason for supposing them to be friendly toward him.

The taller of the two, a black-bearded, broad-shouldered man, whose pockmarked features were marred by the fact that he had no nose, panted noisily ahead of his companion, and Garry noted with a pang of envy that the ruffian wore a gold-mounted sword at his waist. That the strangers were English was evinced by the foul oaths with which each interlarded his conversation as they hoarsely whispered with one another. That they were pirates

Garry had not the slightest doubt, and he determined to tread warily until he should ascertain what their intentions toward him might be.

Crouching low, he followed the unsavoury pair and, when they stopped at the small stream, mystified by the sudden disappearance of the tracks they had been following, the young Scotsman was near enough to them to make out distinctly what they were saying.

“What now, Toad?” quoth the smaller of the two as he spat into the stream and scratched his head in perplexity.

The man addressed as Toad—he of the pock-marked face and noseless countenance—rested his hands upon his hips and likewise spat into the little brook.

“Beshrew me!” he said, in puzzled manner. “Methinks the oaf must have flown away! Canst see aught of him on the strand ahead, Trap?”

The other shielded his eyes against the sun and earnestly scanned the long expanse of level beach which lay before them.

“He’s nowhere in sight,” he asserted. “Didn’t I tell thee, Toad Gripes, that the man was a warlock—an evil spirit? Else how could he have withstood the fire that destroyed his ship?”

Toad grumbled blasphemously and spat again into the stream.

"We know not that the man was aboard that vessel," he muttered stubbornly. "Thou'st been full of mad ideas ever since we left the *Prudent Mary*. I've been telling thee that the man is in search of treasure, and it behoves us to follow him. Tell me I lie!"

He whipped out his sword and gently pricked his foot with the point as though to test its keenness.

"Say it," he demanded truculently. "Call me a liar!"

Trap Farthing swore impotently.

"But he's gone!" he declared. "And he's left no mark whereby we may follow him."

"Mayhap the wind has blown all traces of his track away," said Toad, whose mind could carry but one idea at a time. "We'll continue along this beach and, no doubt, we'll meet him ere long."

"But these tracks shew plain enough," objected Trap, "that the wind has not——"

Toad scowled and looked significantly at the blade of his sword, and Trap Farthing, with a sigh of resignation, stepped across the stream and was followed by Toad Gripes.

These two worthies owed their lives to the fact that, in company with a large part of the crew, they had been sent ashore to fill the water beakers on the morning of the *Prudent Mary's* destruction and, when the *Happy Adventure*

was observed, they had been left behind when came the sudden call to arms. It was while the pirate ship lay awaiting the merchantman that the galleon was sighted and the doomed pirate tackled her heavier antagonist.

When the explosion took place, the two pirates were seated on the sand, bemoaning the cruel fate that had kept them from a share in the spoils which would, no doubt, be garnered from the galleon, and the *Prudent Mary's* sudden annihilation left them gasping for the space of minutes.

They had watched the pursuit and destruction of the English merchantman and had wandered down the coast in the hope that something of value might float ashore from the burned ship. The abandoned small boat promised to prove useful to them until they found that she contained no oars; so, hauling her ashore, above the reach of the tide, they continued their quest and, though they found nothing but charred pieces of wood and vast masses of cinders, they eventually came upon Garry's footprints in the sand and decided to follow them.

Toad maintained that the person to whom the prints belonged had undoubtedly rowed ashore in the abandoned small boat and was gone in search of buried treasure and, though Trap Farthing had scoffed at the idea, it was agreed that they follow the tracks in the hope

that their maker might be able to assist them in quitting the country. In any case, as Toad Gripes said, he evidently wore a good pair of boots and he, Toad, was badly in need of sound footwear.

Garry crept from his shelter long after the two men had crossed the little stream. He came out of the thicket and gazed up the beach and, far, far in the distance, he made out the tiny figures of the pirates—and the sun glinted on the bright scabbard of Toad's golden sword.

Where the River Neiba finds its way to the sea, Garry encountered the two men next morning. He had slept soundly and well and had made a satisfactory breakfast on the infallible banana and, having investigated and passed the dying embers of their camp fire, he had continued on the pirates' trail, sick at heart with worry over Joan, but living to the full the glory of the beautiful morning.

The beach had come to an abrupt conclusion at the base of some low, rocky hills, and Garry, struggling through the thick, thorny growth that covered them, kept his eyes alert for any sign of possible ambush. He saw no sign of the two men when he reached the top and, in the shade of a stunted guayacán, he rested from his labours—for the hill had been steep and the sun was hot.

Before him lay spread a wonderful vista of

mountain and plain, and at his feet the wide blue reaches of the Neiba, or Yaqui del Sur, reflected the rushes and trees that lined its banks. Though fifty miles away, the snow-covered peak of Tina loomed gigantic, and behind the huge mountain a mass of giants bore him company. Garry had eyes for none of these, nor for the calm serenity of the cactus-covered leagues of desert that lay between him and the distant mountains. His observant eyes had caught sight of something that moved, near the bank of the river, not half a mile away, and he gazed interestedly in that direction, waiting to see again what it might be that had attracted his attention.

He uttered an ejaculation of interest as the figure came out into an open spot and stood beside the river. Though the distance was great he could see that it was the figure of a woman, and he cautiously left his leafy shelter and worked his way in her direction. It was not his intention to frighten this person, nor to reveal himself to her, for he knew that an Englishman would not be tolerated by the Spanish authorities of Hispaniola.

When he was within a hundred yards of the unconscious figure, he came to the edge of the flood plain of the river and watched with interest the dainty movements of an Indian girl who, gracefully and with ease, covered

alternate patches of the stream with a circular fish-net. The beauty and symmetry of her figure as she swung the net about her head and then cast it from her sent a thrill of admiration coursing through the veins of the susceptible young man. He had not known that Indians still inhabited the island, and he was not prepared for such a vision of wild beauty as now rewarded his sight.

The fact that the maiden *was* an Indian and that her people must of necessity be friendly toward any foe of the Spaniards, prompted Garry to reveal himself to her, and he was about to rise to his feet and walk toward her when he sank back into hiding with a smothered gasp of alarm. Toad Gripes and Trap Farthing had also seen the maiden, and the two men appeared from behind some low bushes, creeping stealthily toward the girl, who was but a scant ten paces from the nearer of the two pirates!

She drew her net slowly back across the water and was swinging the dripping mesh about her head in preparation for another cast when Toad Gripes sprang upon her and clapped a hairy paw over her startled mouth. Trap Farthing quickly bound the helpless girl's limbs with the net rope and between them they carried her up from the shore and laid her upon a spreading tussock of grass.

The sight of the frightened maiden in the

hands of those ruffians was more than Garry could stand and, despite his defenceless condition, he rose up from his hiding-place and strode quickly over toward the two men. His sudden appearance disconcerted them mightily for a moment, and they stared at him with startled eyes as he coolly walked up to them and bade them undo the maiden's bonds.

"Aye, aye, sir," muttered Trap, instinctively recognising a superior, and he was about to untie the ropes which bound her when Toad Gripes, with an oath, stayed his hand.

"Curse thee for a dotard, Trap Farthing!" he angrily exclaimed. "Wot thee not that this rogue is the youth whose trail we've been following? And here he be—giving us orders as though he were Billy Penn himself. A plague rot you!" he said, rising and addressing Garry with heat. "I've a mind to break you—bone from bone!"

Trap gazed up, his mouth agape, and Garry caught an expression of hope in the brown eyes of the Indian maid that strengthened his resolution.

"You'll loosen the maid, sirrah, or you'll rue the day that ever you set eyes on me!"

Toad ignored his command and contemplatively surveyed Garry's feet.

"I like your boots, my bucko," he said, "an' I'll trouble you to take them off."

Garry insolently surveyed the man up and down as he stood, arms akimbo, awaiting the rush that he was sure would follow his next speech.

“From thy talk, Toad Gripes,” he sneered, “one would imagine that thou wert some person of importance, instead of a pockmarked, evil-smelling lout. Thy snout—for it cannot of a truth be called a nose—is an object of repugnance——”

He stepped aside as the furious Gripes rushed for him and, with a quick movement of his foot, he sent the bully sprawling into a small bed of *quasavara cactus*. Before the roaring bravo could extricate himself from the painful grip of the thorns, Garry had deftly drawn the man’s sword and, laughing delightedly, had advanced upon the disconcerted Trap Farthing and had pricked him away from the wide-eyed Indian maid.

Screaming with rage, Gripes picked himself up from his prickly bed and turned with drooling lips upon the young man who had insulted him. Garry laughed tauntingly.

“An’ you still have the desire to possess yourself of my boots,” he mocked; “come and take them!”

Gripes stayed his rush and turned red eyes upon Trap Farthing.

“Wilt thou stand there like a goggling calf and see thy mate treated thus?” he howled to

the astounded man. "Here, give me thy sword—I'll cleave yon malapert's sconce in twain!"

He tore Farthing's weapon from him and, jumping over the Indian girl's shivering form, he approached the smiling Scotsman and made a lunge at him.

"Thou hast strength, my friend," said Garry, easily avoiding the man's ponderous rush. "But thy muscles will avail thee nought against a man who has measured blades with the best of Cromwell's cavaliers. Observe this counter!"

His sword lightly flashed and Toad Gripes bellowed with rage and pain as Garry slit the partition between his gaping nostrils.

"Now thou'lt be able to breathe more easily—though to be sure it has not added to thy beauty," observed the young man tantalisingly. "'Tis a pity thine ears are so large!"

His weapon flashed once—twice—and the tops of the pirate's ears were lopped off. The fascinated Farthing gazed with awe upon such an exhibition of swordsmanship.

Garry backed away from Gripes' rush, but in doing so he tripped over the recumbent form of the girl. He scrambled to his feet, but barely in time to escape the down sweep of the infuriated man's sword. Gripes came after him and he, in his turn, tripped over the girl's shrinking figure. He glared down at the terrified maiden and then, in brutal mania, he raised his

weapon and would have dashed her brains out had Garry not sped his blade swiftly into the other man's throat and, with a sob, the lifeless form of Toad Gripes collapsed and rolled again into the cactus.

V

Knights Errant

“**A**ND now, sir,” quoth Garry, turning to the gaping Farthing and handing him his own weapon. “I am at your service. Would you care to measure blades with me?”

Farthing shuddered as he accepted his sword and sheathed it.

“God forbid!” he muttered soulfully.

“Then untie that maiden's bonds.”

Garry looked almost regretfully at the chastened Farthing.

“Are you sure that the desire to possess my boots does not obsess you?” he hopefully asked.

Farthing made emphatic denial, and he hastened to do as Garry had bid him.

The girl rose to her feet and stared with horror at the bloody form of the dead pirate. She turned to Garry, looked earnestly into his face for a moment then, seizing one of his hands in hers, she kissed it fervently and ran lightly up the river bank.

Garry looked regretfully after the girl. He sighed, sheathed his blade and addressed Farthing.

“And now,” he said, “you will take the body of that rogue and carry it to the river. ’Tis too ugly a sight to leave exposed to the gaze of God’s creatures. Hasten—that mine eyes be not longer offended by the sight of the vile carcase !”

And Trap, perspiring under the heat of the sun, pulled and heaved at the lifeless body until he had reached the sandy edge of the river. Here he hesitated for fear of what the water might contain but, when Garry made a suggestive movement with his sword-arm, the man plunged hastily into the river and dragged the corpse in after him. The current seized it avidly and bore it downstream and, as it settled to the bottom, it caught on a projecting root or boulder and a dead hand appeared for a moment, waved in ghastly farewell, and sank from mortal sight.

Garry reclined upon the tussock where afore-time the Indian maiden had been laid and, while Trap Farthing returned to the shore and sat at a respectful distance from the man who had just slain his partner, he buckled on the dead man’s belt and idly played with the beautiful weapon which had come into his possession.

“’Tis a wondrous fine sword, Master Farthing,” said Garry, addressing his surly

companion. "From whom did that cut-throat steal it?"

Trap scowled at his questioner.

"He won it in fair fight from a Spanish merchant on board *La Trinidad Valencera*, a galleon we captured off Tortuga. Toad Gripes was well matched when he fought the Spaniard and, in certes, 'twas a right noble fight!"

He looked sullenly at Garry.

"Toad was an ill-visaged man and free of his tongue—but a gallant swordsman withal. He was no cut-throat, sir."

Garry shrugged his shoulders.

"I liked not his manner with the ladies," he answered, smiling upon the other. "Methought he was over brusque in his treatment of the Indian woman. But I honour you for your loyalty to the man, Master Trap Farthing, and, as we must now bide together I bespeak your fealty as I pledge you my allegiance."

Trap looked uncomfortable.

"I cannot forget, sir, that Toad met his death at your hands, and though I could beat you with my fists, I will be pleased to follow wherever you lead. We two could go far against the Dons."

Garry sheathed his sword and walked over to Trap Farthing, who took his proffered hand without emotion.

"Spoken like an Englishman, Trap," Garry

rejoined ; “ but I think that you err in considering yourself my master in the art of fist-cuffs.”

The ex-pirate’s eyes brightened.

“ An’ you care to put the matter to the test, sir,” he suggested eagerly.

Garry gave a delighted laugh.

“ Truly, friend Trap,” he countered. “ Thou’rt a man after mine own heart ! Nay, sirrah, I would not make more hideous thine ugly countenance.”

Trap grinned, nor did he take offence ; this rough banter was what he was accustomed to. Though he grieved in his own way for the man who was slain, he bore no animosity now to the man who had killed him—but he was determined, nevertheless, to show this young aristocrat that, man to man, he was the better fighter. He would bide his time.

Garry had no qualms as to the other’s loyalty. He strode along the river bank with his new-found companion as they searched for a place to ford the stream and, little by little, he induced the man to tell him his story. Trap, on his part, was curious as to the manner in which the other had escaped from the wreck, and he breathed more freely when Garry told him of the trick he had played upon his trackers, what time he had walked up the bed of the small stream and left the two pirates scratching their

heads in perplexity. He also learned from the young Scotsman of the abduction of Joan Manvers, and he swore that he would support his companion in any undertaking upon which he saw fit to embark.

Garry had no reason to love Trap Farthing. Indeed, he would have been justified in slaying the man as he had done his mate. Farthing had been a pirate, and was therefore an outlaw, against whom every hand could have been justly and legitimately raised. He had been also avowedly following Garry with no good intent and, had the meeting taken place under circumstances more unfavourable to Garry, he had no doubt that either of the two ruffians would have taken his life with little or no compunction.

But Garry was glad of the man's society. Alone, he had felt a world of doubt and uncertainty as to his future actions, and the idea that he might again see his beloved was indeed a tenuous one; but now, with a companion whose plight was as desperate as his own and whose blade was at his service, he felt that he could dare anything. The prospect of once more dreaming of being able to see Joan, and, mayhap, to rescue her, had suddenly grown within bounds of possibility.

Trap, on his part, though the killing of Toad Gripes rankled sore, was very content with the new arrangement of things. Recognising in

Garry the master mind, the man threw all burdensome responsibility to the winds and was quite content to follow whithersoever the other might lead. When he and Toad had been partners they had shared the responsibility in a state of equality and had worried blasphemously over every little problem that beset them. Now Trap's worries were over and he stepped out beside his new leader, care-free and irresponsible.

A short distance up the river the water shallowed and, by the marks on the sand approaching the water, Garry rightly judged that here was a ford. It was with lighter hearts and the keen expectation of adventure that the two oddly-mated companions stepped out along an ill-defined trail that led through the low, wooded hills that bounded the northern bank of the river and, as they ascended the path, Trap carolled blithely and lopped the heads off the little lizards who clung, tails upward, on the sides of the small trees that lined the path.

"Thou art very dextrous with thy sword, Trap," remarked Garry as, for the hundredth time, the keen blade whipped through the air and the headless, quivering body of another hapless lizard slowly contracted and fell to the ground.

"That be praise indeed, master," quoth Trap, grinning his pleasure, "and, until I saw the manner in which you played with Toad

Gripes, methought none other could stand against me. I am the veriest jobbernowl in comparison with you."

Garry chuckled.

"Thou doest me great honour, friend Trap," he replied. "But put up thy sword; thou'lt dull it against these trees and, God wot, we'll need keen blades ere long, or thou'rt not an ugly rascal."

Trap guffawed merrily as he sheathed his weapon.

"An' we run foul of the Dons this very day, master," he replied, "Trap Farthing will shed no tears. Aye," he added, "a Don to match every lizzard whose head has fallen an' I'll be satisfied."

And, bellowing a rollicking chantey, the pirate strode along the path followed by the grimly amused Scotsman who was his acknowledged leader.

The day was cool and a refreshing breeze blew in from the great bay of Ocoa. Brilliantly-coloured birds flitted through the luxuriant growth that clothed the hills but, strange to relate, no songster's trill vibrated through the scented air, unless the shrill scream of an alarmed parrot could be so designated. The gaudy birds of the tropics are invariably mute.

Among the trees the ubiquitous lizards scampered in sudden alarm and, as the two wayfarers

passed them, they clung stiffly to their perches and quivered violently in impotent fury. Great centipedes scurried to the damp protection of fallen leaves and bright-coloured moss and, ever and again, an incautious scorpion raised its venomous tail as the feet of the men brushed it by. For the most part, however, the tropical woods were still, and the innumerable buzz and hum of tiny life but served to accentuate the silence of the vaulted forest.

Where the path started to slope downwards the two men paused and set about preparing a meal of sorts. From the capacious pockets of his baggy breeches Trap produced several plantains which he had had the foresight to save against an emergency after breakfast that morning. Around them no familiar fruits grew but, after cooking the plantains and washing them down with copious draughts of fresh water from a near-by spring, the two men relaxed into attitudes of ease, quite content with the meal to which hunger had lent an appetising savour.

"This be a goodly land and fair to look upon," mused Trap idly as he lay back against a moss-covered rock and surveyed the panorama which lay outspread before him. "A pity it is that the Spaniards own it all—a plague encompass them!"

"It is indeed a fair prospect," agreed Garry, lazily scanning the miles of sun-drenched country which stretched in long, shimmering

undulations to the distant mountains. "And I doubt not that a thousand perils lie hid in yon greeny woods."

Trap's eyes sparkled and he spat expressively.

"Aye," he whispered. "God grant that our good swords drink deep of Spanish blood and that we bring your lady safe home to Scotland, my master!"

"Amen to that!" breathed Garry, and his face lightened at the thought of what the future might hold in store for him. The idea of Joan Manvers a helpless and unwilling captive in the hands of Quesada y Perez had weighed heavily upon him and, but for his own constant peril since the galleon had sailed away, it might have rendered him desperate. As it was he consoled himself with the thought that the Spaniard would undoubtedly respect Joan's beauty and breeding and that some day, God willing, the right would triumph and he would, with Trap Farthing's timely aid, succeed in rescuing her from her captors. Ah, Youth! Thine eyes are wilfully blinded to the difficulties which lie in thy path when the much to be desired goal is to be reached! Only Youth could have been sanguine of success in the desperate enterprise upon which Garry had embarked; only Youth—and Ignorance.

And so these two crusaders—the Englishman and the Scot, in whose veins flowed the common

heritage of valour from an ancestry that recognised no conqueror save Death, these sat upon the hill and gazed northward to the mountains. And, contemplating the unknown, they were not afraid.

“What seest thou, friend Trap?” asked Garry at length, roused from his meditations by a startled ejaculation on the part of his companion.

Farthing shaded his eyes and he rose to his feet as he peered intently toward a tall clump of cocoanut palms whose feathery tops rose gracefully from the edge of the bay, perhaps a league and a half away.

“Yonder, master,” quoth the pirate, indicating the trees with outstretched hand. “Yonder where the shore turns eastward. Do you not see, behind the palms, the masts of a vessel?”

Garry stood up and peered along the line of the man’s arm.

“’Tis but the wind playing among the trees,” he declared laughingly. “’Fore God, Trap, thy vision is addled. There is nought there but—Stay, man!” he cried excitedly as his eye caught the glint of gold behind the palms. “Thou’rt right! There is a vessel there—and more than one, or I’m a zany!”

Trap’s eyes danced with eagerness and excitement.

“Aye, master,” he cried. “There they be! But the Dons have digged a canal, or hauled their vessel up on dry land. There is no sea there!”

Garry strained his eyes in an endeavour to fathom the mystery.

"I cannot understand it," he said. "The line of the shore distinctly passes the place where yon vessel lies hidden, and curves to the east. And yet——"

He pursed his lips.

"Methinks I see the glint of water," whispered Farthing excitedly. "The sun sparkles between the trees!"

"Thou'rt right," was Garry's answer after he had looked intently toward the distant spot. "The vessels are afloat, and there must be a hidden entrance to the basin wherein they are lying."

"Then it behoves us to find it!" cried Trap, clasping the hilt of his sword. "Come, master—the day is yet young and our blades are thirsty!"

Garry laughed.

"Truly thou art bloody-minded, my Trap. Peradventure thou'lt get thy bellyful of fighting ere we find Mistress Joan; but, unless it be absolutely necessary, we'll remain hid from the Spaniards while we may. By stealth we may achieve our ends, but do we set about seeking swordplay with the Dons, our shrift will be short."

"Are we not to punish the rogues, then?"

"Aye, in the proper time, Trap. But our main object now is to get in touch with Mistress

Joan Manvers. Depend upon it, the day will come when thou'lt get enough—aye, and more than enough, of fighting.”

Trap grunted acquiescence, nevertheless the quickened spirit of adventure filled his soul, and he was eager to thrust forward in search of the excitement that his spirit craved, and he implored Garry that they press on and investigate the strange circumstance of the apparently landlocked ships.

“That we will do right speedily,” answered Garry, nothing loath to satisfy his consuming curiosity regarding the vessels; “but I pray thee do nothing uncircumspect. Bear in mind that the whole success of our mission lies in the secrecy with which we enshroud our movements. Better that we accomplish nothing rather than that we fall into the hands of the Spaniards. For thee it would undoubtedly mean the Inquisition and a nameless death.”

Trap looked at his master in surprise.

“And you, sir,” he asked. “Would not you also suffer the same fate?”

Garry smiled.

“I would not allow myself to be intimidated in any manner whatsoever,” he said. “Nath’less, it is not my intention to be captured by the Dons—but let us go forward, my inquisitive friend, and see what we can see.”

He thought it best that Trap remain in

ignorance of his faith, for he knew that the fellow would not understand, and he wished to set before the man no problem that would confuse his brain nor undermine his loyalty.

Upon the northern slope of the hill and in the jungle below it the sun beat down with terrific intensity. Here the cooling sea breezes could not reach the adventurers, and the sweat poured down their cheeks as they pushed forward through the cactus-strewn desert that lay between the hills and the spot which was their goal.

"S'welp me!" groaned Trap as, for the hundredth time, he pulled a wicked cluster of barb-pointed guasavara spines from his bleeding legs. "I'm as full of holes as is a sponge! This is a country fit only for Spaniards and other such scum. 'Tis no place for a God-fearing Englishman!"

Garry, equally harassed by the cactus, his throat parched with thirst, could not but smile at his companion's fervent and contradictory imprecation.

"Aye, Trap," he vouchsafed, "these infernal plants do indeed beset us sore. But, patience man, we cannot have much farther to go."

Nevertheless, the way seemed interminable, and both men were well-nigh exhausted when finally the jungle thinned ahead of them and, between the lessening cactus, they made out the welcome gleam of blue water.

As is so often the case when man attempts the passage of wood or jungle without the aid of compass or astrolabe, the two castaways found that they had been wandering in a circle, and that they had reached the seashore at a spot about half-way between the base of the hills and the fringe of palms behind which lay the mysterious ships. Though the distance in a straight line was trifling, they had nevertheless covered considerably more ground than had they been able to hold a straight course toward the palms.

The afternoon sun cast long shadows of the trees upon the glinting sand as they stepped out upon the yielding beach and, with faces and breasts bared to the salty breeze, the two men drew long breaths of the cooling air before they stepped, with renewed anticipation, up the shore. This ended abruptly, as Garry had surmised, in a deep, man-made channel, through which it was very evident that the Spaniards had towed their ships.

The setting sun illumined the gilded masts of three large galleons as Garry Graeme and Trap Farthing gazed with bated breath through the shore scrub upon the hidden vessels. Upon each of the ships a bare half-dozen men lazed and smoked as they unsuspectingly guarded the vessels and, at sight of the small number of soldiers who manned the ships, Trap breathed

heavily and would have suggested some rash move had he not caught a warning glint in his master's eyes, whereat he subsided resignedly.

"They ride low," quoth Trap, rubbing his itching palms together as he regarded the beautiful vessels.

"And for an excellent reason," replied Garry. "They be heavily laden with treasure!"

And the two men gazed so long and earnestly at the Spanish ships that the sun was gone almost before they were aware of its setting. Trap's enthusiasm and the natural cupidity of man had infected Garry with something of his companion's zeal, and they conversed together in eager whispers as they discussed the feasibility of attempting the cutting out of one of the vessels single-handed. Garry at last reluctantly realised that the feat they contemplated was impossible and it was with heavy heart that Trap blindly followed his master back through the jungle that night and, in an open space, well concealed from possible observation, lighted the fire around which they contemplated sleeping. Both men were hungry, thirsty and tired and only the lucky capture of an agouti, an animal that looked like a large rat and, when roasted, tasted, to the hungry men, like the most delicious fowl, raised their lowered spirits to normal. The further discovery of a small, trickling stream of cool water near-by

put them in excellent humour and, when at last they settled themselves to slumber, high hope again reigned in their breasts.

The little fire flickered bravely in the darkness. Twice during the early part of the night did Garry rise and replenish it and when, toward midnight, both men slept soundly, a quayacán stump which Garry had thrown upon the embers suddenly blazed high, and a pair of hostile eyes, far off in the jungle, discerning the faint reflection of the distant fire, gleamed malevolently as their owner noiselessly set out through the forest toward the spot where the hated white men lay encamped.

The surrounding trees and the tall, forked cactus gleamed redly in the warm light of the fire. The stump of guayacán hissed and spluttered importantly and trembling shadows played on the farther trees. Aroused by the unaccustomed warmth, an evil thing crawled from under the rotting roots of a crumpled plantain, tentatively swayed to and fro upon the damp mould and then started, grotesque and frightful, toward the sleeping men.

As the foot-long legs of the giant tarantula pressed the crackling leaves beneath his furred body, Trap Farthing shivered in his sleep and opened his eyes. Sleepily he gazed up into the velvet sky while the fanged horror, in long, low strides, crept steadily toward him. His eyelids

fluttered and slowly closed and he breathed a weary sigh as he shiveringly settled himself to slumber again, and the menace that approached him paused, tremulous, upon its hideous legs as the human turned on his side and faced the direction in which the tarantula lay crouched.

Trap shivered again and his throat contracted in sudden fear. Some unexplainable premonition warned him of danger and his eyes opened again and he stared fixedly into the darkness—but nothing disturbed the calm serenity of the night. The shiny boles of waxen-barked trees reflected back the red glow of the fire and in the deeper blackness beyond the dim circle of light the white stems of dead cacti loomed sepulchral.

But stay—! What was that black, misshapen object which slowly assumed shape beside him? A round, crawly, creeping monstrosity from whose bulbous head glinted two cold, green-tinted eyes! The thing moved toward him and Trap's throat rattled as he frantically endeavoured to scream. The arachnid crawled clumsily forward, its hideous eyes fixed relentlessly upon the terrified Englishman. Trap closed his own in horror—came a sudden swishing sound, followed by a hiss as of a sudden exhalation of breath, and Trap's startled eyes opened upon the sight of the tarantula, pinned to the soft ground by an arrow which clove its middle.

"Gadzooks!" came in relieved tones from

beside him, and he looked around into the affrighted eyes of Garry Graeme. "I was stricken with so great a fear that my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth!"

"And you were awake, too, master?" whispered Trap shakenly. He looked with repugnance at the horribly squirming beast. "But from whence came that arrow?"

Garry's eyes roved uncertainly about him and he was about to reply when, from an overhanging branch above the fire, a slim, naked figure dropped to the ground beside them.

"Od's Blood!" cried Trap in alarm, springing to his feet, his sword in hand—but Garry restrained him when he noted that their Indian visitor had one hand held up in an attitude of peace.

"Be not dismayed!" cried Garry to his astonished henchman. "The man means us no scathe!"

Their visitor lowered his hand and spoke to Garry, and that young man was astonished to hear himself addressed in intelligible Spanish.

"I came to kill you, señor," said the Arawak, "but I saw that you were a friend and I stayed my hand."

Garry gasped.

"For what crime was my life a forfeit?" he asked. "And how came you here so propitiously?"

The Indian stolidly transferred his gaze to the open-mouthed Farthing. Him he regarded suspiciously for a moment and then he turned again to Garry.

“You are Spanish,” he said, “and therefore are you my enemy.”

“But—but—!” gasped Garry Graeme.

“My sister, Puna, was set upon by two white men and was rescued by you, señor. To no other man does her description fit so perfectly. Do I speak the truth, señor? And am I not indebted to you that my sister is now safe in her father’s house?”

“Why, yes,” was Graeme’s hasty reply. “I was instrumental in saving the life of a young maiden yesternoon. But I am not——”

“This other man I know not,” resumed the Arawak, indicating Trap Farthing, to whom this conversation was quite unintelligible, “but, as he appears to be your friend, I spared him. Ye must not spend another night beyond the protection of Azua’s walls.”

Garry’s brows knit in perplexity.

“I do not see,” he began, but he was again interrupted.

“Your countrymen have once more started encroaching upon Cucubáno’s domain and have slain many Arawaks in weeks past,” stated the Indian. “Therefore is every Spaniard who is encountered in these hunting grounds of the

Arawaks to be slain. You have I spared for what you, señor, have done for Puna, my sister. Would that all your countrymen were as you !”

Trap’s perplexed gaze was attracted at that instant to the hairy monster, large around as a meat platter, who wrenched the point of the retaining arrow from the ground and rolled over in a paroxysm of struggling. The sight of the horrible thing stirred his dazed senses to action, and, seizing his sword, he hacked the repulsive creature to pieces. The dismembered bits of the spider’s body still quivered with malignant life, however, and stifling his repugnance, he swept them all, with the flat of his weapon, into the glowing embers.

“ I know not where you learned his lingo, master,” panted Trap as he wiped his sticky blade against his stockings ; “ but will you ask this naked savage if there be any more of these foul creatures hereabouts. Of a truth they create in me a great disfavour ! ”

At sound of his English speech the Indian gazed in startled fashion at the pirate and he turned inquiringly to Graeme.

The Scotsman repeated Trap’s question and the Arawak shrugged his bronzed shoulders.

“ There be many such creatures in these forests, señor,” he replied, “ and their bite is death. The tarantula would not have attacked you had you allowed it to satisfy its curiosity, but

I saw that ye contemplated interfering with it and I feared for your safety. Therefore I shot it."

Garry shuddered as he realised how utterly he had been at the mercy of this sure arm.

"We owe you a debt of gratitude," he began.

"Nay, señor," expostulated the Indian. "Rather is my debt to you greater than I can ever repay. But tell me why you address this uncomely person in such strange language."

The Scotsman could scarce forbear to smile as he thought of how Trap would have received that "uncomely person" had he understood the Spanish tongue, but he controlled his features.

"We are not Spaniards," he said. "We are Englishmen and enemies of the Spaniards. We are your friends."

The Indian's eyes opened wide and he stared in startled unbelief into Graeme's face.

"Ye are not Spaniards!" he echoed incredulously.

"We are Englishmen," Garry reiterated.

The Indian youth opened his mouth as though to speak, hesitated as he glanced at the dour-faced Farthing and then stepped forward and took one of Garry's hands in both of his.

"Truly if ye be enemies of the Spaniards are ye then friends of the Arawaks," he earnestly said. "I, Turbo, son of Cucubáno, welcome ye both to the country of my people, and to the hospitality of my father's house. But are ye

followed by armed hosts of your countrymen ? ”

He looked eagerly into Garry's face as he asked this question and his disappointment was keenly manifest when the Scotsman shook his head.

“ Alas, we are the only representatives of our people hereabouts,” was Graeme's answer. “ But in the waters which encompass your land are Englishmen to the number of the hairs upon your head who seek to do battle with the Spaniards. God willing, they will free this beautiful country of yours from the oppressors of your people and the land will flow with Spanish blood.”

Turbo's eyes glistened in the light of the dying fire.

“ I must hasten and tell my father the things whereof you have spoken,” he said. “ Long have my people groaned under the oppression of Spanish tyranny. My father, Cucubáno, chief of the Arawaks, will weep with joy when I tell him of the evil fate which threatens the hated Spaniards. I go.”

And before Garry could stop him the Indian youth turned and noiselessly disappeared into the night.

“ And now, fair sir,” drily remarked Farthing as Garry gazed after the vanished Turbo, “ an' you will be so good I would be pleased to learn that of which you and yon savage made so much ado.”

He listened without comment as Garry told him of Turbo's conversation and, when Graeme was done, spat soberly into the fire.

"Will these savages assist us in tracing your lady?" he asked.

Garry sighed regretfully.

"Beshrew me if I did not forget to ask the aid of his people in my righteous endeavour," he said. "Plague take me for a fool!"

And as the two men sat beside the replenished fire, their weary eyes ever on the watch for another of the loathsome arachnids which had so alarmed them, Garry continued to upbraid himself for his forgetfulness.

VI

In "The House of the Admiral"

IN "The House of the Admiral" the Count of Peñalva lived in regal splendour. His palace, the stateliest mansion in the whole of La Española, was built in a commanding position overlooking the ruins, on the far shore of the River Ozama, of what had been the first capital of the island. Ancient even in those ancient days, the viceregal mansion was an edifice of imposing splendour and of massive construction. Its sturdy stone walls were surrounded by substantial, though fragile-looking wooden porches, supported upon graceful arches

and corbels and adorned with clinging vines and the wonderfully coloured flowers of the tropics. The windows and doorways of this beautiful building were embellished with handsome arabesques, and such was the magnificence of its interior that Oviedo and other contemporary chroniclers dwell long upon the carvings, paintings and statuary which lent an air of luxury and splendour to the old building.

Joan's eyes opened in admiration as, after passing over the moat and entering the walled city through a massive gate, she beheld the Governor's palace. The Count himself assisted his fair guest over the rough cobbles of the street and, though she could not understand a word of the language he spoke, Joan was much impressed by the courtesy and kindness of his manner toward her. When finally she was shown to a room in the northern part of the palace and, by signs, was given to understand that it was for her own use, she sank back upon the dainty coverleted bed and sighed with wonder at the sheer beauty of her apartment.

She saw nothing further of her host that day, and when she whispered her opinion to Agatha that the Governor was a kindly, Christian man, the deaf mute paused in the operation of preparing her mistress for bed and shrugged her shoulders doubtfully.

But the Governor, by his actions on the suc-

ceeding days, did nothing to shatter the good opinion that Joan had formed of him. Nothing could have exceeded the courtesy and consideration with which he treated the girl and, neither by word nor deed, did he presume to force any unwelcome attentions upon her. To Joan, grieving dutifully for her husband, and harassed by the longing to know that Garry was safe, the Spaniard appeared the soul of sympathy and understanding, and she came to look forward to his infrequent visits to her apartment with real interest and pleasure.

"I cannot see why thou doubttest the sincerity of the man's attentions, Agatha," she said one morning to the black servant, after Peñalva had visited the apartment and had left a large silver tray laden with luscious fruits behind him. "I would that I could speak his language that I might thank him for his exceeding great kindness to us both. But for him we would still be aboard that awful vessel." She shuddered as she thought on what might have been her fate.

The opportunity to thank the Count for his hospitality was soon forthcoming. On a morning while Joan sat by her window looking out upon the gardens of the palace, she heard a rap at her door. Without looking up she bade whoever it was come in, as was her custom, for she thought that Agatha desired entrance.

The door slowly opened and a white-faced

young woman, whose eyes showed traces of recent weeping, entered the room, looking with interested though inscrutable expression into the startled countenance of Joan Manvers.

"Good morrow," said Joan, bowing slightly to the newcomer. "May I ask your pleasure?"

She looked with interest at the girl as she awaited her reply.

"I am sent by the Count of Peñalva," said the stranger in excellent English, albeit with a slight trace of accent. Joan thought that her voice sounded weary. "He wishes me to see to your comfort."

Joan's heart had given a great leap within her breast at sound of her own tongue spoken by the pretty stranger, and her woman's sympathy went out to the girl, for she instinctively sensed that some sorrow lay heavy upon her.

"There is nothing that you can do to make my stay here more pleasant," replied Joan, looking gratefully toward the girl; "but I am thankful for your company and am glad that you are come, for you can tell the Governor for me how much I appreciate his great kindness. I am dumb before him for I cannot speak his tongue."

The stranger cast a darting, quizzical glance at Joan before, in obedience to the other's invitation, she seated herself upon a chair.

"I shall be pleased to convey to the Governor your expression of gratitude," she said. "But

allow me to present myself to you, madam—my name is Adèle de Pencier.”

“You are French?” exclaimed Joan in surprise.

“Yes, madam. My father was a planter on the island of Tortuga, and when the Count of Peñalva laid waste the island in 1653 my father was sent home to France—but I was kept a prisoner by the Count and have since resided in Baní, where the Governor maintains a small establishment.”

“You are part of the establishment?” queried Joan.

Adèle lowered her eyes.

“It is my house,” she quietly replied; but, tell me, madam, is there aught else I can do for you? No other message that I can take from you to the Governor?”

She looked narrowly at the English girl.

Joan shook her head.

“Nothing else,” she said, “only that I am grateful to him for his kindness—and to you for your goodness in coming to see me.”

Adèle laughed bitterly as she rose and tossed her head in an attitude of insolence.

“His kindness!” she echoed with a forced laugh. “His kindness! Little fool!” Joan shrank back in sudden surprise. “You may keep your thanks for some person who may appreciate them!” cried the Frenchwoman

with sudden vehemence. "What are you doing here! You—you——! I—I detest you!"

The two girls faced each other—the one black-haired, black-eyed and hysterical—the other's fair face flushed with amazed indignation. At that moment Agatha entered the chamber, and Adèle, her eyes snapping, walked quickly out of the room and slammed the door behind her.

Joan gave a nervous little gasp and she shook her head weakly as she sank down into her chair again and mechanically watched the black woman as she arranged her mistress's clothing for the daily walk in the garden. Joan had been loath to accept the fine silks and satins that Peñalva had bestowed upon her, but as her wardrobe had been left aboard the *Happy Adventure* she accepted his gifts, stifling her qualms of conscience with the thought that she would make payment for the stuffs on a happier day.

But she recked not of clothing as she sat, half stunned, upon the chair and stupidly gazed at Agatha. The sudden, violent outburst on the part of the French girl bespoke a mighty and unsuccessful effort at self-repression—it had startled and worried Joan, and she racked her brain in an endeavour to fathom the stranger's reason for so hating her.

To the best of her knowledge she had never laid eyes upon the girl before. No member of her family had ever, so far as she knew, wronged

one of that name—and yet the girl had said that she detested her—Joan Manvers, with whom even the very birds of her native highlands were wont to be friendly. She blinked rapidly and a tear coursed down her face.

Why had Adèle de Pencier been weeping? The girl's eyes bore unmistakable signs of recent tears, and Joan wondered if, in any way, she had been connected, or responsible for, the girl's distress. Why had she come all the way from—wherever it was that she had claimed to have come, just to do the Governor's bidding? Was it her house—where Peñalva maintained an establishment?

Was she the Governor's housekeeper, or . . . Joan bit her lips and gazed reflectively at her silent servant.

Was she . . . the Governor's mistress?

Joan pursed her lips in thought and she gazed out through her open window—gazed with unseeing eyes at the massive ceiba tree, to which, popular legend has it, Christopher Columbus once tied up his vessel.

Could she be Peñalva's mistress?

It was possible, nay, probable, that her relations with the Governor were of an intimate nature, but why should she express her hatred of the man's unwilling prisoner in so forceful a manner? Surely, if Adèle de Pencier was the Governor's mistress, then she, Joan Manvers,

was, in a manner of speaking, also her guest, and as such was entitled to the hospitality and consideration so graciously shown her by the man. The woman's attitude puzzled her, until a thought . . .

Was it jealousy? Was this little dark-eyed woman jealous of the attentions being bestowed upon this blue-eyed stranger by Peñalva, her master? Did she begrudge the consideration being shown this fair Scotswoman by her lord? Joan shook her head and half smiled, for surely no sane woman could take exception to the simple courtesies of which she had been the recipient. No, the reason for Adèle de Pencier's hatred was something that could not be explained, and Joan attempted to dismiss the subject from her mind, with but poor success.

The Frenchwoman returned next morning, and though she was studiously polite to the other, Joan knew that a devil slumbered behind those flashing black eyes, and she forebore to ask the girl the reason for her strange enmity. Then, again, there were many things that Joan wished to discuss with the Governor, and she talked earnestly with Adèle on the matters that were nearest her heart. She wished the woman to ask the Governor when he might find it expedient to send her to an English colony; to crave that her husband, or Garry Graeme, her friend—she did not tell the Frenchwoman

that he was her lover—might be granted mercy should they (hopeless thought) be taken alive as captives. But above all she pleaded that the Englishwomen who had been taken from the *Happy Adventure*, and of whose fate she was in ignorance, might be granted the same treatment as was being accorded her, and that these helpless non-combatants be granted their freedom at the earliest possible moment.

“And you consider that the Governor will listen to your plea?” asked Adèle curiously when Joan had exhausted the list of her wants. “Well, we shall see to-morrow, when he returns from Baní, how merciful he can be.”

Joan did not press the girl for an explanation of this remark, but she controlled herself in patience until Peñalva himself should return to the capital.

And that very night, when the moon rose high above the sleeping island, and the eerie plaint of the “kokee” sounded from the palm groves across the river, to Joan was brought the horrible realisation that one at least of her companions of the *Happy Adventure* was still alive, but in such plight that it were far better that she were dead.

“Oh, God!” screamed a woman’s voice in the silence of the night. “Oh, God! My babies—my babies!”

And Joan, sitting suddenly upright in bed,

shivered with terror, for she recognised the voice as belonging to the wife of an honest young colonist, whose two flaxen-haired children had been the apple of his eye and the sole topic of his conversation. He, poor fellow, was dead, and his wife . . .

Again the woman's lament rose upon the still air and a dog howled in lugubrious sympathy from outside the castle walls. Another dog took up the plaint, and another, until the mournful bay-ing of a dozen dogs made night hideous.

Joan hastily draped a covering over her trembling form and stepped out upon the balcony which overlooked the gardens. The night was beautiful and the moon, bright though it was, could not hide the lustrous beauty of the Southern Cross. She leaned against the wooden rail, listening intently for a repetition of the cry that had awakened her but, with the exception of the distant, choking sobs of a woman, and the lonely ululations of the dogs, no other sound could be heard.

The night breeze blew cool on her cheek; the odour of jessamine and orange rose on the heavy air—and of a sudden the face of Garry Graeme appeared to smile down upon her from the starry clusters above, and she made sure that he was dead.

She turned and walked, dry-eyed, into her apartment again, and long she lay upon the

coverlets, face down, while the sound of her heavy breathing might have betokened the fact that she slept. But when she finally drew the covers about her and turned her face to the open window, her pillow was wet with tears.

The Count of Peñalva was a striking figure as he bowed his way into Joan's apartment, followed by the sulky Adèle de Pencier. His long, curling black hair fell in glossy ringlets about the gold and scarlet trappings of his tunic and, against the black of his sharp-pointed beard, the snowy whiteness of his linen gleamed immaculate. The rich scarlet of his velvet breeches, gathered at the knee, below which a pair of silken hose displayed the firmness of his legs; the white, wide-mouthed leathern boots, with golden spurs at heel; the richly-ornamented sword and scabbard, adorned a figure of whose impressiveness the Count was not at all unconscious.

In a simple grey frock the sullen Frenchwoman afforded a striking contrast to her resplendent companion, and, at sight of the girl's sallow complexion and the simplicity of her garments, Joan experienced an unrighteous glow of satisfaction that her own nimble fingers had fashioned a dress more in keeping with the gorgeous raiment affected by the Governor. Then she chided herself for her ungenerous

emotion—though the eager brilliance of her eyes and the delicate flush of her cheeks did not abate one whit in consequence.

"Buenos dias, señora," saluted Peñalva, doffing his befeathered hat and bowing low as he entered the girl's apartment.

Joan curtsied and glanced inquiringly at Adèle de Pencier as the man addressed her at length.

"The Count trust that you are comfortable in these quarters and that you will inform him of anything you may desire," interpreted the Frenchwoman in listless tones.

"I am more than comfortable, thank you," was Joan's reply. "There is nothing he can do—save those matters of which I spoke to you yesterday."

Adèle turned to Peñalva and the man listened attentively to what she had to say. He smiled ingratiatingly upon Joan as the Frenchwoman translated his reply—but something in the man's eyes caused a chill of doubt and uneasiness to course up and down her spine.

"He knows nothing concerning the people whereof you speak," said Adèle coldly. "As for the woman whose screaming annoyed you, the Count will see that she disturbs you no further."

"But, please," protested Joan almost tearfully. "I do not wish that that poor unfortunate woman be put into prison—she does not

annoy me! Oh, prithee, Adèle, speak for me! Ask the Count to have her brought to me. I—I——”

Peñalva's brows knit and he looked curiously at the French girl as Joan tearfully protested against further cruelty to the unfortunate woman upon whom the night of despair had descended. At the girl's translated words, however, he smiled urbanely and nodded reassuringly to the Englishwoman.

“He will see that she is made more comfortable,” said Adèle, regarding with vindictive interest the pale features of the woman she was addressing. “He tells me to say to you that you will hear her screams no more.”

And with this doubtful assurance Joan must needs be content, but she noticed in the nights following that she heard no more the dreadful laments of the stricken mother, nor did any untoward event mar the serenity of her days.

Each morning Adèle came in to see her and, though the French girl made no more hysterical outbursts of speech and was in every way a considerate and attentive hostess, Joan felt that a barrier of restraint definitely loomed between them—a wall of misunderstanding that was not removed until one sultry evening some two weeks after her arrival at the city.

The humid heaviness of the heated air presaged a storm, and Joan, seated upon the balcony which overlooked the garden, despite

the clammy heat of the evening, felt a chill of foreboding as of some coming evil.

The patient Agatha stood beside her mistress lazily fanning her with a palm-leaf fan, and only the rustle of this sounded above the silence of the night. To be sure, the lazy thunder of the Caribbean's distant surge beat dully on the ear ; rose the distant, fretful wailing of a heat-tortured child . . . the shrill plaint of a tiny tree-toad in the garden. But these sounds served only to accentuate the apprehensive silence of the gathering night.

Inland, many leagues away, the purple of the mountains rose to the black, evil-looking clouds of a lowering sky and, as the silent figures on the balcony watched, the solid front of those inky, cumulus masses was rent by jagged streaks of lightning.

It grew darker and darker—and Joan could see only the luminous whites of Agatha's eyes as they glanced affrightedly toward the threat which was writ upon the far-off heavens with fiery fingers. The black woman knew what the sign portended and, at the first pulsating mumble from the distant storm, she incontinently dropped her fan and fled into the house. Joan glanced anxiously toward the mountains and, shivering with nervousness, she followed her servant and retired within the room. She bade Agatha close and bar the tall wooden

shutters of the window, but the girl had vanished and she turned to the task herself.

The shutters were heavy and they taxed her strength to the utmost, but at last the thick wooden screens were closed and Joan lay against them, gasping in the close, oppressive atmosphere of the room.

“ Buenas noches, señora ! ”

The thick, masculine voice broke suddenly upon her startled ears and Joan turned toward the spot from whence had come the sound. Confronting her across a small mahogany table, upon which stood the guttering stone lamp, was the Governor, and one look into those bleared, lecherous eyes told the frightened woman that the man was drunk.

“ What is your wish, sir ? ” asked Joan breathlessly as she backed up against the wooden shutters.

Peñalva leered drunkenly at her and he swayed as he stood with clammy hands atop the supporting table.

Joan gave a terrified glance about her, but there was nothing with which she could defend herself should the drunken man attempt to wreak his will upon her. She felt suddenly small and helpless, and her knees became unsteady as a sudden terror seized her.

“ You will please to leave this room ! ” she commanded weakly, and she bit her lips as she

realised that the Spaniard could not understand what she said, nor, understanding, would he be likely to do as she bid him.

"Agatha! Agatha!" she called, and she gave a sudden shriek as the Governor made a drunken lurch toward her.

But she was quicker than he, and the drink-be-fuddled man followed clumsily after her, the perspiration rolling down his suffused cheeks, and a string of unintelligible oaths issuing from his lips.

"Agatha!" screamed Joan, clutching at the handle of the door, but before she could fling it open, Peñalva was upon her, and she saved herself from his embrace by throwing herself upon the bed where, a moment later, the man imprisoned her in his clutching arms.

"Vaya! Condenada!" growled the Governor as Joan's small teeth closed upon one of his fingers, and the man dashed the girl's head against the pillows. With a despairing whimper Joan pushed the besotted face away from hers as she relaxed with closed eyes—and at that moment the door beside them opened.

"Que es eso, señor?" cried Adèle de Pencier as she stared in amazement upon the struggling pair.

Peñalva grinned almost abashedly as he

released the Scotswoman and clumsily struggled to his feet.

“Es nada, Adélecita,” he murmured apologetically. “It is nothing. The woman would have me make love to her—but I would not be untrue to you, my—hic—dear.”

He walked unsteadily past his mistress and disappeared in the blackness of the hall. Joan, who had understood nothing of this colloquy, sat dizzily up and looked into the piercing eyes of the other woman with gratitude.

“I thank you, Adèle,” she murmured faintly, and she closed her eyes in sudden weakness. When she opened them again Adèle was still staring bitterly down upon her and Joan’s face went whiter still as she saw the hatred in the Frenchwoman’s eyes.

“You thank me—you!” laughed Adèle, and her words cut the hot, torrid air of the chamber like a stiletto. “You little innocent! You, who profess great gratitude to the Governor for his kindness to you—and to me for my tolerant attitude toward you!”

Joan did not attempt to answer the hysterical woman. She sat upon the edge of the bed, her eyes closed, her body swaying weakly.

“You wanton, you!” screamed Adèle, misconstruing the other’s silence. “Gratitude! Bah! So you pay your debts of gratitude by

trying to inveigle my Bernardino to be false to me—to me, his mate—his woman ! ”

Joan raised her head and looked beseechingly into the other's face.

“ I did not,” she gasped earnestly. “ I did not ask him into my chamber.” Her voice steadied and a flush mounted to her cheeks. “ Do you insinuate that I wished to endure his hateful caresses ! ”

But the other woman cowed her by the majesty of her anger, and Joan shrank back in alarm as the other's menacing figure stood over her.

“ You speak that way of my Bernardino ! ” sobbed Adèle. “ You speak of his ‘ hateful caresses ’ ! You heretic—an Englishwoman—a common strumpet picked from an English trading vessel ! *You* dare speak that way of the most noble, most—most—I'll pluck thy treacherous eyes out ! ”

The door was open behind her, and as maniacal tears filled Adèle's eyes in the fury of her rage, she raised her hands and dashed them madly away, but this action gave the despairing Scotswoman the chance to rise and slip quickly past her and into the blackened hall and, as she stumbled in a panic through the pitchy blackness of the ancient building, the screams of the maddened creature behind her lent wings to her frightened feet.

At the end of the hall the floor suddenly gave

way beneath her and she fell, clutching the empty air, to the foot of the broad staircase. Unmindful of her bruises, she was up in an instant and running with panting breath toward a dull light which glowed far ahead of her.

It was a torch that blazed high beside the great front door of the palace and, before the startled sentry on duty outside the gate could intercept her, the frantic woman brushed past him and became as one with the darkness of the night.

"Carajo! Quien vá!" bawled the sentry and only the muttered rumble of the approaching storm answered him.

VII

On the King's Highway

HARRY dropped off to sleep with his feet pointing toward the replenished fire, though Trap Farthing, alert for the appearance of another of the hairy horrors that had so alarmed him, was a long time closing his eyes. But tired nature asserted herself and Trap's reluctant eyes closed in slumber and, when the energetic Scotsman shouted in his ear and awakened the ex-pirate, the rosy sun of dawn was dissipating the mists from the surface of the lagoons and bayous round about them.

"Wake up, laggard!" cried Garry good-naturedly to the drowsy Trap. "'Tis another day and we must start betimes if we would avoid the heat of yon blazing disc."

Trap sat up and stupidly rubbed his eyes. He stifled a yawn as he looked fearsomely into his high boots.

"Start, master?" he queried. "Whither are we bound?"

"In truth thou hast a short memory, my scurvy friend," retorted Garry. "Did I not tell thee that we would continue our journey to-day toward the capital of this accursed island?"

Trap grumbled sullenly.

"You told me nought," he muttered, slipping a foot into one of his boots.

Garry laughed carelessly.

"Of a truth, then, I must have forgot," he declared. "But hasten and collect firewood that we may cook our breakfast. I would make an early start."

As the two adventurers made their way through the dim recesses of the tropical jungle after having filled their bellies with food and drink, Garry reflected on what he had learned from the Indian, Turbo, the night before. He half regretted that he had not besought the man's aid in their enterprise, but he consoled himself with the reflection that, after all, the presence of an aborigine would be an awkward

impediment to their progress should they, by any chance, fall in with a party of the Spaniards.

Trap grumbled ever and anon, what times the sharp-pointed cactus penetrated his breeches. He was reluctant to leave the vicinity of the treasure ships and, whenever he thought upon the wealth which those vessels undoubtedly contained, he swore fretfully. But the spirit of adventure lightened his step as he got farther and farther away from the fascinating vicinity of the galleons and, as the day wore on, Garry was constrained to caution the fellow against singing too boisterously, lest the noise arouse the curiosity of hostile listeners.

And the cactus grew less dense as their way led them past the unseen city to the higher ground beyond it and they were at last rewarded by the unexpected appearance before them of a broad highway which, judging by the care with which it had been built and the very evident signs of being the bearer of much traffic, was undoubtedly the main road between Azua and the city of Santo Domingo.

"How now, master?" queried Trap as he spat upon the dust of the road and carefully scanned its shimmering expanse. "The road is empty; what say you to walking along it that we may survey the city—the cross of whose church I can see over yon distant bushes."

Garry stepped out into the road beside his

henchman and his eyes followed the direction of Trap's outpointed arm.

"We are fairly safe here," he said, glancing hurriedly up and down the road. "No person in these countries travels during the heat of the day if he can possibly do otherwise. But hold thine arm steady, lout! Dost expect that mine eyes can look at a score of places at once! Where is thy cross?"

Trap squinted his eye and looked along his arm.

"There, master," he ejaculated. "There, where that vulture circles through the air . . . right below it! Ah, the bird is gone!"

"But I see the thing," exclaimed Garry excitedly. "Truly, Trap, thou hast wondrous sight! But—but——" He stood on tiptoe and shielded his eyes with his hand. When he turned to his companion again his face was serious.

"Knowest thou what thy cross has turned out to be?" he asked soberly. Trap peered curiously at the distant object.

"Aye," he returned. "It is a gibbet—a gallows atop the wall of the city. Methinks I saw a body hanging therefrom."

"Dost wish to make a closer examination? Hast still a desire to investigate the city?"

Trap nodded stubbornly.

"Let us walk to the knoll ahead of us and take shelter in the bushes which line the sides of the road," he suggested. "From there we

can at least see what manner of town these Spaniards build."

Their view from the knoll was most comprehensive. Hidden though they were from any but direct observation from the distant city, the whole port and town of Azua lay outspread before them, and a long stretch of dusty road leading into the city through the cactus-covered plain was visible.

The town was built on two sides of a deep harbour which pointed in from the Bay of Ocoa like a sharply-defined index finger. In the harbour were no ships of any size but, by raising the eyes a trifle, the two men could make out the delicate traceries of the golden galleons outlined against the azure blue of the sky—perhaps half a league beyond the city.

The city itself, a clustered pile of stone and wooden houses protected by an encircling wall of brown coral rock, lay still and somnolent under the fierce heat of the noonday sun. No breath of air disturbed the unruffled blue of its little harbour, in which floated three small boats with sails furled, from one of which a little spiral of blue smoke slowly ascended until it merged with the misty opaqueness of the heat-suffused firmament.

One sign of life, other than that of the curling plume of smoke, was visible within the city. Along the wall a soldier walked, his arquebus

dangling at his side and, from a distance, the heat shimmer along the top of the stone ramparts alternately elongated and contracted his white-clad form so that it made one dizzy to long regard him. At the end of the rampart nearest the two adventurers, the gibbet, with its ghastly load, reared its horrible length above the city wall.

It was very pleasant lying upon the soft grass under a spreading baitoa tree, whose thickly-leaved branches allowed no ray of the tropical sun to penetrate its cool protection, and the two men, munching lazily upon a baked plantain apiece, lay somnolently at ease while a cool zephyr softly laved their bared heads.

"We should not be wasting time in this manner," sighed Garry regretfully, as his heavy eyes closed and opened. "We should be on our way east toward the capital, Trap—a plague rot the fellow! He's gone to sleep!"

And the afternoon breeze crooned among the baitoa leaves; restless lizards scurried around the sleeping figures of the weary men, and an agouti, its pink nose twitching curiously, solemnly eyed the recumbent humans—caught the scent of man, that most terror-inspiring odour to all wild life, and, with a flirt of its head, disappeared.

The intensity of the sun's heat was sensibly diminished and the cool breath of the Trades

blew in from the Caribbean when Garry opened his eyes ; but it was not the breeze that disturbed him, nor was it the natural awakening of a sleep-refreshed man. He sat up yawning, vaguely wondering why he had awakened, and then he cut his yawn off short and listened attentively with all his ears.

Came to him over the sougning of the wind in the tree-tops the muffled clop ! clop ! of a horse's hooves as the beast lazily clumped its heavy way through the hot dust of the hidden road. Without wakening his partner Garry rose quickly to his feet and cautiously made his way through the thick undergrowth of the forest until he was enabled to see a small stretch of the road, toward which the horse was approaching.

A fat, grey mare, her head nodding in rhythm to the movements of her forelegs, plodded clumsily through the dust, her rider uttering fervent Spanish oaths every time the ambling old beast stumbled over inequalities in the road. Following the horse and rider, and at a respectable distance in the rear, rode the man's servant, mounted upon a pendulous-eared donkey whose silky muzzle was already grey with the dust stirred up by the horse ahead.

Garry could scarce forbear from smiling as he eyed the two riders from his hiding-place. The master was a fleshy mountain of a man, so fat

indeed that his aged steed's back was perceptibly bent by the weight imposed upon it; while his good man, following humbly astride the little donkey, was a thin, cadaverous individual, whose frail shoulders seemed scarce broad enough to bear the burden of the heavy arquebus they were called upon to carry.

"Come, come, Fernando Guadalupe!" shouted the fat man in Spanish, stopping his horse and turning heavily in his seat as he addressed the plodding servant. "Art thou asleep that thou canst not see that I die of thirst? Water, Fernando Guadalupe! Anda, ligero!"

Fernando Guadalupe jogged his reluctant steed into a dust-scattering shuffle and, when he arrived opposite the stout man, he wearily dismounted and, standing on tiptoes, held up to his master a leathern sack, whose sides glistened with moisture.

Garry eyed Fernando Guadalupe's unguarded weapon with covetous eyes, but before he could put into execution his half-planned scheme to run out and seize the firearm, the fellow returned to his mount, and master and man jogged slowly along out of sight.

Two minutes later Garry and Trap were walking swiftly up the road behind the two Spaniards while Trap, his eager eyes ablaze, plied his companion with questions.

“Be not over-zealous,” counselled Garry. “Do thou as I bid thee. If we rouse their suspicions we will never obtain possession of their weapon.”

“But, master——”

“We must pretend to be Spaniards,” continued Garry, his quick brain rapidly formulating a plan. “Thou must feign dumbness, Trap. Thou’lt not find it hard to do.”

Trap grinned.

“An’ they start asking me questions—what then, master?”

“Thou’lt be both *deaf* and dumb,” quoth Garry. Then, as Trap drew his blade from its scabbard and gloatingly felt its point, he bade him put up his blade.

“We’re not to fight these Dons, then, master?” queried Trap with disappointment in his tones.

“Not if we can relieve them of their weapon without bloodshed,” returned the other. “But have patience, my good fellow. Thou’lt have—as I have before told thee—thy bellyful of fighting before we leave this island.”

“And I would it might soon start!” grumbled Trap.

Jogging slowly along the dusty road the two Spaniards were not aware that they were being followed until Garry suddenly appeared beside the donkey of the servant Fernando Guadelupe.

The man gasped in affright and tugged at the straps of his arquebus, but assured by the friendly smile with which he was greeted and the courteous salutation accorded him by this rough-looking man, he lowered his hand and glanced meekly toward his master who, upon hearing the voice of a stranger, had pulled in his mount and was now looking anxiously back.

“Buenas tardes, señor,” greeted Garry, removing his hat and bowing low to the apprehensive man. “If you will be so exceeding kind I would ask you to graciously permit us to accompany you along this road. You ride well armed, and rumour hath it that bandits infest these parts.”

The stout man glanced uneasily at Garry's companion and then back into the smiling face of the Scotsman. What he saw there appeared to reassure him.

“You are welcome, señor,” he replied. “Nay, it is I who am glad of your company. It is true that the bold robber, Pedro el Malo has been captured and has met with his just deserts——”

“He who hangs above the wall?” hazarded Garry.

The Spaniard briskly shook his head.

“That is an Englishman—but one never knows when one may encounter a band of filthy savages,” he continued. “Allow me to present myself to you.” He drew himself up im-

portantly and looked so much like a huge, fat toad that Garry was afraid Trap would laugh. "I am Eladio Soto y Figueroa, of the city of Santo Domingo de Guzmán."

Garry bowed.

"You must be connected with the administration of the government here," he suggested. "So capable-looking a gentleman rides on important business."

"Ah, no," returned the Spaniard with a smile, nevertheless his fat face puffed with pleasure at Garry's implied compliment and he beamed down upon the young man. "I am but a merchant, though I deal in profitable wares. I expected a ship-load of African cattle to arrive in Asua this past week, but I hear that the arrival of my ship has been delayed by the presence in these waters of those devil's spawn, the English, and that it will touch Santo Domingo in about a fortnight. I ride back empty-handed."

"Ah," commiserated Garry, "I am truly sorry to hear that your journey has been without profit. But I forget myself, Don Eladio—I am a Spaniard——"

"A Madrileño, by your accent, señor," conjectured Don Eladio.

Garry bowed assent.

"Pedro Cordoba, a mine owner of Azua, at your service," continued Garry. "And this is my servant, Panch," he said, pointing to the

lowering Trap. "He, alas! was captured by the Indians, who tore out his tongue and punctured his ears so that he cannot hear."

"Ay de mi! Que lástima!" ejaculated the Spaniard. "An ill-favoured fellow at the best, señor." And he continued to gaze upon the embarrassed ex-pirate until Garry was afraid that the man would forget himself and curse the Spaniard roundly. "But I did not see you during the three days I spent in Azua," said Don Eladio, turning to the Scotsman.

Garry raised his hands in an expressive gesture.

"Early this morning I arrived from the mountains," he swept a comprehensive hand toward the distant hills. "When I saw you preparing to leave town, señor, I hastened to join you—but you had already left when I put forth."

The fat Spaniard expressed his concern.

"You will not be making a long journey, I take it?" he said, looking at Garry's dilapidated and dusty shoes, "else you would travel mounted."

"Ah, no, señor, I go but to the house of—of Francisco Fuentes along the road a short journey."

Don Eladio pursed his fat cheeks.

"Francisco Fuentes?" he murmured, looking up into the sky. "I cannot seem to recall

the name. But no matter—I am very grateful for your company, señor.”

And the stout man, glad of an audience, chattered away at the interested Garry, calling at frequent intervals to his peon, Fernando Guadelupe, for water. Garry allowed him to talk and, when he gave signs of asking embarrassing questions, spurred him on with questions of his own. Behind the donkey, scowling ferociously at its scared rider, strode Trap Farthing, alternately cursing to himself the heat, and damning to eternal fire the animals which were responsible for the choking dust through which he walked.

. . . “Vile Englishman !”

This sudden ejaculation, following a short pause during which the travellers had been trudging silently along through the dust, caused Garry to glance quickly up into the Spaniard’s face. He felt for a moment that his identity had been discovered and he prepared to give Trap the signal agreed upon before the cadaverous Fernando Guadelupe could use his firearm.

But Don Eladio was not addressing either of the two strangers. He angrily lifted his rein from under his horse’s mane and again ejaculated :

“Accursed heretic !”

Garry looked interested.

“To whom do you refer, señor ?”

“Why, to that captured Englishman, to be

sure," returned the Spaniard. "He was pulled out of the ocean more dead than alive by the crew of *El Rey de Castilla*."

"I had heard that a foreigner had been brought into the city," prompted Garry, and his interest was now unfeigned. "Did you hear his name?"

"Let me think," mused Don Eladio. "The creature's name did not interest me, but methink it was Manverse—or Manvers. His ship was sunk by *El Gran Grifon* and he was the only survivor."

"Ah, there was an English ship sunk hereabouts?" remarked Garry, more to make conversation than for enlightenment. He wondered why his heart should beat so wildly at news of Howard Manvers' death—if Manvers it be.

"Did you not hear of it?" asked the Spaniard in surprise. "They say the gun-fire was heard in Azua."

He settled himself more comfortably in the saddle, after calling for water, and proceeded with great glee to tell this stranger the wonderful story of the galleon's fight against great odds.

"It was by Beata Island, señor, that the galleon fell in with six English pirates, part of the fleet which infests these waters and, after a most gallant fight, they were all driven off or sunk. Among them was a large fighting vessel of over one hundred guns which was run ashore

and burned. It was from this vessel that the Englishman was saved. Better that Alonzo Quesada y Perez had left him to drown ! But such is the magnanimity of our rough Spanish seamen. . . . He was hanged this morning."

Garry concealed a bitter smile.

"Do you know Quesada, señor ?"

The Spaniard nodded.

"A rare dog, Quesada," he said, smiling reminiscently. "Ah, the stories they tell of that man ! A marvellous eye for the wenches has Quesada ! Ho, ho ! . . . But he fell foul of the Governor, and they say that Peñalva forced him to give up the prettiest English baggage that has been captured by one of our gallant seamen in many a day. Ho, ho ! Peñalva is more than a match for——"

"Then she is in Santo Domingo !" ejaculated Garry, seizing Don Eladio's broad, wooden stirrup. The Spaniard looked down into Garry's wild eyes in astonishment.

"Señor !" he protested, and Garry's hand fell to his side.

"A thousand pardons !" he said. "I twisted my ankle and clung to you for support. You say that this English maiden is in the city of Santo Domingo ?" he persisted.

"Yes—the Governor was ever lucky in his amours." He glanced curiously down at Garry's feet. "I trust that you suffer no pain," he said.

Garry forced a smile to his wan countenance.

"Not in my ankle, señor," he replied, and the stout Spaniard noticed not the ambiguity of his explanation.

Just then Trap, walking too close to the donkey, was kicked violently in the stomach by that deceptive beast, and he doubled up by the side of the road for a moment until he had recovered his wind, and it was only by the most ferocious facial contortions on the part of his master that he refrained from expressing aloud his profane opinion of the drowsy-eyed beast. . . . And at that moment a party of foot-soldiers, led by a mounted officer, suddenly appeared around a bend in the road and the two Britons exchanged uneasy glances.

"Ola, Manuelcito!" shouted Don Eladio jovially as the inquisitive officer cantered ahead of his men to see what this strange little group portended.

"Caray! Is it you then, Don Eladio?" responded the young officer as he drew his steed to a halt beside the awakened mare of Soto y Figueroa. "Methought you had killed a robber"—eyeing the recumbent form of the sullen Trap with interest—"and I wondered I had not heard the sound of your musket." He looked at Garry and then back at Don Eladio, and he arched his eyebrows inquiringly.

"Ah, pardon me!" exclaimed the fat man.

"I was sure that you two young fellows were acquainted. Captain Manuel Gomez — Don Pedro—Pedro . . . I am desolate, señor," he said, turning to Garry; "but I have forgotten your name."

Garry smiled in a sickly manner. His memory, too, had failed him.

"Why — why — señor," he stammered. "Pedro—er—Coruña, to be sure. I have great pleasure in meeting you, Señor Capitan," he said, bowing low to Gomez.

"Coruña—Coruña——?" muttered the stout Spaniard meditatively. "I could have sworn that it was some other name!"

His brow puckered in thought, and Garry, staking his freedom on a desperate chance, smiled vaguely toward the score or so of soldiers who were lolling negligently along the side of the road, and praying fervently that the law of chance had not failed him, cried jovially—"Que tál, Juanito! Como está la novia?" ("Hello, Johnny! How fares your sweetheart?")

A little man at the far end of the column straightened up from his moody contemplation of a bruised toe and, with an innately courteous gesture to the jovial stranger, whose face he regretfully failed to remember, displayed a white, even set of teeth as he grinned proudly at being so distinguished above his fellows.

"Buenas tardes, señor," he answered. "Good

afternoon, sir. She gets stouter every day, sir." And, at the crude double-entendre, everybody, including Gomez and Don Eladio, roared with laughter. The crisis was past, but Garry wondered what he would have done had there not been a soldier by the name of John in the little band.

The two parties separated with shouted expressions of goodwill, and the acidulous Fernando Guadalupe, mounted solemnly astride his donkey, unsmilingly gave as good as he got as the dusty soldiers chaffed him regarding his homely steed.

"Good fellows all," chuckled Don Eladio, wiping his streaming eyes as they continued their journey. "They have been out hunting savages—I pray that they killed a goodly number."

They plodded on in silence.

"No one is safe from the filthy barbarians," mused the Spaniard. "Even in the Capital one is not free from their depredations."

"I should think that with so many soldiers on guard, Santo Domingo would be secure from their attacks," said Garry.

"They slip by in some manner," sighed Don Eladio, "and when it is least expected a whole family, or two, or three, are found dead in their beds."

"They slip in without being challenged?" returned Garry incredulously.

“There is a secret entrance to the city which is known only to the Indians. They come and go without anyone being the wiser until their crimes are discovered.”

Garry thought over this statement and uttered an exclamation. If the Indians could make their way into the centre of the city, then surely he, with the man Turbo as guide, might be able to make his way to the residence of the Governor—the fiend who might be at that moment maltreating the object of his—Garry’s—adoration.

The afternoon sun was casting long shadows and Fernando Guadelupe was nodding drowsily in his saddle when Garry Graeme gave the signal to his henchman. There was a startled grunt, a thud, and a cloud of dust as Trap’s powerful arms swept the amazed peon from his saddle and deposited him roughly in the centre of the road.

“I will trouble you to dismount, my friend,” said the Scotsman, smiling up into the dazed Soto y Figueroa’s gaping countenance. “I have need of your steed.”

“Are you a bandit, then?” exclaimed the Spaniard in terrified tones. “Look, here is money—five thousand reales! Take it and spare my life!”

“Kindly dismount!” commanded Garry, and there was a look in his eyes that Don Eladio dared not brook. He clumsily en-

deavoured to obey this terrifying young man, and his progress was considerably hastened by a rough shove administered by Trap Farthing with the bell muzzle of the arquebus. The Spaniard fell heavily into the dust, and his horse turned her grey old head and, with ears pricked, curiously watched the antic of her master.

“Be pleased to walk with your servant into the jungle,” commanded Garry, spurning the sack of money which the Spaniard held imploringly up to him. “You will abide there until the sun has set, and if either of ye show your faces hereabouts until the night come——!” He drew his sword and meaningly thumbed the blade.

The whimpering Spaniard waddled across the road into the jungle, and Fernando Guadalupe, turning over his pouch and powder-horn to the grinning ex-pirate, followed his master into the cactus. Trap herded the two Spaniards before him, prodding them in turn with the point of his sword when they showed signs of lagging. The arquebus he left with Garry, and that young man, holding the reins of the motley pair of steeds, quietly awaited his companion's return.

An English oath rose upon the still air; a scream of agony rang out from the forest—and another. Trap returned to his master, wiping his tarnished blade upon the sides of his breeches.

“They died,” he simply said, and he would

have mounted his steed without further ado had not Garry seized him by the collar.

"What happened the slave-merchant and his servant?" he demanded. "Didst thou slay them both—in cold blood!"

"Nay, master," returned the Englishman. "They turned upon me and would have done me hurt had I not slain them—in self defence."

Garry stared into the man's eyes and, before the Scotsman's penetrative gaze, the other's fell.

"Thou liest, Trap Farthing," declared Garry solemnly. He noticed that a pocket in the other man's jacket bulged. "Thou slewest them for their money—and they need not have died."

Trap's jaw squared.

"What boots it?" he truculently asked. "They were Spaniards—they were better dead."

Garry said nothing, but he turned and tied the reins of his horse to a low bush near-by. Then, removing his belt, he walked toward his companion and bade him do likewise.

"But, master—" objected the ex-pirate, paling slightly at the look of stern displeasure in the other's face.

"Remove thy sword-belt," commanded Garry, waiting with folded arms for the other to do as he had been ordered.

"What is your will, master?" asked Trap fearfully, doing, nevertheless, as he had been bid.

"I'm going to give thee a thrashing that

thou'lt long remember. I'll teach thee to disobey me at thy peril."

Trap swallowed once or twice, and then a look of wonder and joy filled his countenance.

"You'll fight me, sir?" he asked incredulously, throwing his belt to one side as he spoke.

Garry's answer was a blow that caught his companion full on the chest and sent him staggering back. But with a delighted grin, the ex-pirate was back again and Garry ducked his head as the man's long arms swept like flails about it.

"Thou hast much to learn, friend Trap," grunted the Scotsman, and he clouted the other upon the ear with gusto. Trap's joyous expression changed to doubt as his wild swings encountered nothing more substantial than the evening breeze.

"This for Don Eladio!" cried Garry, and Trap's heels flew into the air as his opponent caught him flush on the jaw with all the weight of his body behind the blow.

"Verily, master," quoth Trap in reluctant admiration as he groggily rose to his feet, "you can hit harder than a donkey can kick—and I'm a judge!"

Garry smiled as he waited for the other to collect his scattered faculties. Trap sparred cautiously—and he uttered an ejaculation as his next blow missed by the length of his arm.

"—— and this for Fernando Guadalupe!"

said Garry. The other swayed drunkenly to the impact of a blow that well-nigh stunned him. Garry caught the tottering man in his arms and set him upon his feet again.

"Hast had enough?" he asked. "Art repentant for thy misdoings?"

Trap stubbornly shook his head and tottered forward, hitting weakly at the elusive shadow that danced before him. Garry laughed delightedly and his admiration of the other man's pluck grew amain as Trap came grimly on seeking further punishment, but he did not attempt to hit him again until he saw by the man's clearing eyes and steadier pose that the effects of his last blow had almost vanished.

"One more for the money thou stolest!" whispered Garry, and a look of fear came into Trap's eyes as he backed away and glanced nervously at his master's bleeding knuckles. But he could not escape the punishment that awaited him, and as he vainly endeavoured to dodge the Scotsman's blow something struck him a resounding crash upon the temple and he fell like a log, unconscious.

When at last he opened his eyes and stared stupidly upward, he saw the solicitous face of his companion bending over him, and he sighed in desperation as he endeavoured to rise and continue the fight. But the other helped him to his feet and bore him gently to the side of the road.

“ Rest there awhile, Trap,” he said, and there was admiration in his tones. “ Beshrew me if ever I met a bonnier fighter. Art satisfied, friend Trap, that I am thy master ? ”

The ex-pirate’s face beamed with pleasure at the words spoken to him, but he did not reply for a moment. He tenderly rubbed the back of his hand across his streaming nose and then staggered to his feet. He swayed for a moment and recovered himself, and then he held out his hand to Garry Graeme.

“ It’s taken a good man to best me, sir,” he said. “ No other man has ever done it but, good lack ! I have indeed met my master ! ”

VIII

The Secret of the Arawaks

IT was late, and the battered ex-pirate was in no condition to travel further that day, so the two men withdrew with their steeds well into the jungle and there they passed the night. When the morning dawned they set off toward the city of Azua, whereat Trap grumbled mightily at having to retrace his steps. He had no faith in the ability of the Indians to assist them in their quest and his impetuous soul yearned for fresh scenes and new conquests—but a smile wrinkled his swollen countenance each time he felt the jingling bag which weighted down his pocket.

Their journey along the king's highway was without incident and, an hour after they had resumed their trip, they loosed the horse and donkey and set off through the forest toward the spot where they had met the Indian, Turbo.

The place was deserted. In the centre of the small open space wherein the two men had had their adventure with the tarantula lay the cold ashes of their fire. No sound disturbed the hot noonday stillness of the cactus forest. Overhead the sun beat down with an intensity which has to be felt to be comprehended, and in the shade of the guayacán and baitoa trees was coolness and rest. They cooked themselves a slender meal of wild yam and plantain and, after refreshing their thirst at a near-by spring, they slept.

A succession of heavy detonations woke the two men and they stared questioningly at one another as the distant sound of firing pulsed upon the heated air.

"Think you that it is the English fleet?" whispered Trap, albeit there was no need for silence.

"'Tis not the sound of cannon fire," said Garry, listening attentively. "Methinks the soldiers of our friend Gomez have encountered a party of the Indians."

Trap's eyes rested upon the captured arquebus and the light of battle shone in them.

“ We will go to their aid then, master ? ” he suggested eagerly.

Garry sprang to his feet.

“ That we will,” he briskly declared and, followed by the now thoroughly awakened Trap Farthing, he pushed off at a rapid pace in the direction from which the sound of firing had come.

But it was a long, tedious journey through the jungle. Both men were hot, thirsty and dishevelled by the time they reached the Neiba and immediately upon their arrival at the river’s edge they forgot the peril that lay somewhere about ; forgot the alligators with which the stream was infested ; forgot everything, save that here was water—clear, refreshing water—and they plunged into the stream, clothes and all, and gloated in its grateful coolness.

Far down the river, at a place where the water shallowed, Garry’s quick eye caught a sudden flash, as of sunlight reflected from burnished metal, and he rose to his feet in the stream, the water dripping from his sodden body.

He looked intently down stream.

“ We are late, Trap,” he said at length. “ The Spaniards have done their work and are returning home. Let us cross the river and find out what deviltry they have been up to.”

And, at the spot where Garry had saved Puna from the hands of the two white men,

and where the strange friendship between the English pirate and the Scottish gentleman had begun, they found dreadful evidence of the Spaniard's work.

A headless, disfigured corpse, evidently that of an Indian youth, lay upon the hot stones beside the river and, in a depression in the bank, they discovered the remains of four more Indians, their broken bodies sprawling in a ghastly heap. From the evidence of their battered and mutilated forms it was plain that the poor wretches had been shot down and then despatched with cutlass and sword.

Trap surveyed with interest the scene of carnage.

"Of a truth," quoth he, "a right merry fray has taken place hereabouts."

"The dogs!" muttered Garry as he stirred a recumbent figure with his foot. "These poor savages must have been surprised and slaughtered in cold blood. Egad, Trap, I could almost forgive thee for murdering those two wretches yestere'en!"

"It was meet that they should die," was the answer. "But, master," whispered Trap, cupping his ear toward a clump of guasavara which lay but a short distance off, "heard you not a cry from yonder bush?—a groan as from one in distress? Ay, there it is again!"

Garry concentrated his attention upon the spot indicated and he listened carefully.

“I’ faith, thou’rt right, Trap,” he soberly said. “There be some person sorely hurt behind yon clump of cactus.”

He walked gingerly in the direction from which a faint sound of moaning appeared to be coming, his sword-hilt grasped firmly by his right hand, and behind him the curious Trap followed his master, the muzzle of his musket perilously close to the other’s head.

“Aye, ’tis another Indian ; mayhap one that the Dons have overlooked,” said Garry as he surveyed the crumpled form of a moaning savage who lay well-hidden behind and among the cactus into which he had fallen. “The fellow is grievously hurt, Trap, and methinks it were well to put him beyond his misery.”

Trap peered interestedly over the bush.

“I have no liking for killing one of the creatures when he cannot even raise his hand,” he averred with a grimace. “Were he a Don I’d take great pleasure in doing it, but—Master ! Look you ! ’Tis our friend who killed the devil’s creature, and who spoke you fair in the forest ! ”

Garry recognised the Indian, Turbo, at the same moment as did his henchman and, as the savage writhed in pain and turned his contorted visage to the sky, the Scotsman leaped over the cactus to the wounded man’s side and, unmindful of the wicked guasavara spines, which

pricked him like so many needles, he raised the Indian's head and took it gently in his hands.

"Go—! Fill thy hat with water and bring it here," he commanded, and Trap hastened to do his master's bidding. "Be not afraid," he whispered to the Indian in Spanish, who shook with fear as he felt the touch of the European's hands. "'Tis I—the man you befriended two nights ago!"

At sound of the other's voice Turbo opened his eyes and gazed up into the white man's face. A faint smile hovered about his swarthy countenance for a moment and then the torn body limply collapsed.

"He has swooned!" grunted Garry to Trap, who at that moment appeared with a dripping hatful of water. "Dash thou a handful of that water over the fellow's face!"

The wounded Indian slowly regained his senses and he bore without flinching the painful attentions of Garry as he crudely cleaned and bandaged the angry wound which penetrated the man's chest. A musket ball had smashed a rib and was now, no doubt, firmly lodged in one of Turbo's lungs. A bloody froth covered the Indian's livid lips, and Garry shook his head doubtfully as he rose to his feet and surveyed his crude handiwork.

"Thou'lt never live to reach thy people, my friend," he muttered in English; nevertheless

he was determined to take the man away from there and he found Trap willingly and sympathetically inclined toward his wishes.

“Perchance some other member of this man’s tribe will aid us in our journey toward the benighted city to which you are determined to go, master,” said the latter as they carried the half-conscious Indian between them up the bank of the river. “Zounds! This savage is a heavy lump! Did he tell you how far we have to carry him?”

Garry nodded his streaming head.

“Up the river,” he gasped, stopping and gently laying the wounded man on the ground. “Egad! Thou speakest truly, Trap! The man is indeed no light weight!”

Trap flicked the perspiration from his eye socket with a dextrous twist of the knuckle. He gazed lugubriously up the stream.

“Of a truth, then, we have a long journey ahead of us,” he grunted. “It is many miles to yon distant mountains.”

Garry shook his head.

“’Tis not to the mountains we have to carry him, Trap—though, in certes, the journey will be long enough. He told me that his tribe are encamped at the mouth of the first stream that flows from this side into the river.”

“Then why not leave him with me and go in search of this fellow’s friends?” suggested

Trap. "You talk their lingo, master— Gad-zooks! What is *that*!"

Something whistled by the ex-pirate's ear and struck the water in the stream near-by with a vicious hiss.

"An arrow!" cried Garry, jumping to his feet and raising his arms as a sign of submission. "The Indians have tracked us and they wish us to stop! Raise thine arms, Trap, and drop that musket!"

"I'll not loose this arquebus," declared Trap stubbornly. "Nor will I so demean myself as to abject myself before a lot of naked savages!"

Another arrow whistled past Trap's nose and, despite his vainglorious speech of the moment before, he perceptibly weakened. When another feathered missile nicked a corner of his ear and he realised that this hint was not meant to be disregarded, he dropped the musket and emulated the example of his master.

Several cautious heads arose from the shelter of the bushes along the bank and, from all sides, silent, bronzed figures glided slowly and warily toward the two whites, the Indians quite disregarding them as they gazed perplexedly upon the body of their wounded compatriot.

"We are not Spaniards," volunteered Garry to an elderly Indian who, by his bearing and demeanour, was the leader of the band. "We

found this fellow wounded by the Spaniards and were bringing him home when you surprised us.”

The old Indian grunted cynically, but he studied the speaker with much deliberation before he again turned his attention to the wounded man. The rest of the band, quite convinced as to their harmlessness, passed the two whites as though they did not exist. Around the recumbent Turbo they gathered and, in the liquid tongue of the Arawaks, plied him with questions.

Turbo's weak responses to their questioning seemed to fill the Indians with despair and rage and many were the baleful glances directed down the stream toward the spot where the little party of Arawaks had been almost annihilated. The Indians glanced more and more often toward the strangers as Turbo whispered on, but in their look was nothing of hostility and, when Garry stepped forward to where the stricken man lay, they respectfully made way for him.

“Cucubáno is grateful to you, Ingles,” vouchsafed the elderly Indian as Turbo smiled up into the white man's face. “My son tells me that you are his friend and that it is you who saved my daughter, Puna, from those who would have done ill by her.”

A gleam of interest lighted Garry's face.

“The maiden—is she well?” he courteously asked.

Cucubáno nodded his head.

“She follows with the rest of the tribe. We heard the sound of shooting and we knew that the Spaniards must be hereabouts.”

But Turbo had fainted again and his father spoke no further word to Garry until the boy had been carried into the cool of the forest and made as comfortable as possible within the shelter of a hastily erected bohio; then after a meal had been partaken of by all, and Trap had wandered off by himself on an investigatory tour of the river bank, Garry told the worried old chief what he knew of the occurrences down the river, and he asked his aid in rescuing the maid who was a prisoner of the Count of Peñalva.

Cucubáno was dubious as to the measure of success which would follow Garry's attempts to procure guides from among the Arawaks.

“My people are not cowards,” apologetically explained the old man as he and his visitors sat outside the bohio, “but you are white and we have learned to fear the people of your race.”

“We are English,” returned Garry.

Cucubáno shrugged his shoulders as he watched the hulking figure of the ex-pirate moving toward them.

“Nevertheless, the white man has ever been the curse of my people,” he said. “I know that you are friends, and you are always assured of a welcome in the huts of the Arawaks for what ye have done for my children; but the

people of my race are a simple folk and unused to the ways of the whites. Stay with us and seek not to pit your puny strength against the might of Spain. You cannot hope to be successful."

"But my lady—my—my sweetheart?" returned Garry.

Cucubáno's wrinkled face was pensive as he gazed off into the distant mountains.

"My wife was stolen from me by the Spaniards," he said, and his voice was low and expressionless. "She was young and comely and I loved her dearly. I strove desperately to get her back and, when I finally found her, dead—thrown to one side as one discards a worn-out bow—I swore bitter vengeance against the people who had done this thing to me. But might prevailed and my men died like flies in hopeless reprisal against the Spaniard. Can you be more successful?"

"I speak their language."

Cucubáno nodded his head.

"The ability to converse with them in their own tongue has already stood you in good stead," he said, "but you cannot hope to hide your identity when you reach Santo Domingo. Questions will be asked you that you will not be able to answer satisfactorily."

"But I do not intend to show myself upon the streets of the city," replied Garry. He told the chief of his plan; of how he intended, with

the aid of an Arawak, to make his way unobserved into the city and, taking advantage of any opportunity that might offer, to get into communication with his lady.

“The secret of the fortifications is indeed well known to us all,” returned Cucubáno. “The Spaniards immured the bodies of the Arawaks who helped to build them into the walls; but several escaped and, through them, the secret has been passed down to us. But none of my people will accompany you, of that I am sure.”

The arrival of the women and children put a stop for the moment to their conversation and Garry regarded the animated scene with deep dissatisfaction. Quite oblivious to the wailing of women and to the curious glances which were cast his way by the timorous and sorrowing natives, he sat beside the chief and his interested henchmen, moodily casting about in his brain some scheme whereby he might induce one of the Indians to accompany him to Santo Domingo. When the maiden, Puna, with a glad cry of recognition, ran over to where he sat and bowed low before him, a smile lighted his dour countenance, and he clasped her hand warmly in his.

“I am glad to see thee again,” he said tenderly, and then, as the maiden glanced shyly and somewhat timorously at Trap Farthing, he continued with a laugh: “this is another friend

of thine, Puna. To be sure, his demeanour on the occasion of your last meeting was not at all hospitable. Give him thy hand—he'll not molest thee now."

Trap, who had listened to all this without the slightest idea of what it signified, stared uncertainly as the Indian girl extended her hand to him, and Garry chuckled with surprised amusement as he noted the flush that overspread the man's temples as he covered her brown little hand with his big hairy paw.

"I thought thee proof against the charms of woman, Trap," he commented. "Truly, I have much to learn. Thy blushes do thee credit."

"A winsome lass, to be sure, master," sighed Trap as Puna smiled sweetly into his face and withdrew to where the other women sobbed in unison with them who mourned their dead.

Garry studied the other for a moment and, under his steady scrutiny, Trap's eyes fell and he grinned boyishly.

"Ah, well," sighed the Scotsman as he thought for a moment on the maid who believed him drowned, "wishing will get us nowhere. We must soon be on our way again, Trap. Methinks we'll receive no aid from these people."

Trap looked his incredulity, but Garry's opinion was borne out when, a short time later, the old chief called for a volunteer to accompany "los Ingleses" to the Spanish stronghold.

The squatted rows of savages showed neither by word nor expression that the proposition so much as interested them, though Turbo, from his bed of pain inside the bohio, weakly cried that he would guide his friends to the Capital whensoever he was able to travel, whereat the Indians who heard him grinned abashedly.

"It is as I told you," said Cucubáno bitterly to Garry when, in response to his appeal, the Arawaks presented a stolid front of indifference. "I lied when I told you they were not cowards. Their spirit is broken by what occurred to-day, and the risk of being slain or taken into slavery is too great for their craven souls. I cannot leave my people else I would accompany you."

"But I, my father, know the entrance to the secret passages," interrupted Puna, who stood beside the old man. "I will go with my friends and guide them into the city, if they so desire it."

Cucubáno smiled sadly.

"Thou, daughter, art more a man than any of these timid rats. But I cannot allow thee to run the risk of being captured by the Spaniards. Thy mother——"

"I owe much to these strangers—to this Ingles," answered Puna with spirit, nodding toward Garry. "My brother, if he lives, will owe his life to them. Your debt, my father, is greater than even the sacrifice of thy daughter could repay."

“But a woman, a comely woman like thyself, could never escape the attentions of those fiends,” objected Cucubáno.

“I will pledge myself to guard your daughter,” interpolated Garry, for the conversation was in Spanish. “She will come to no harm while I am alive to protect her.”

“While you are *alive*,” grunted Cucubáno ominously. “Aye, I do not doubt that she will be safe in your keeping—while you are alive.”

Puna clung to her father’s arm.

“’Tis little we can do to repay these strangers, my father,” she pleaded. “Give me thy consent that I may aid them in their endeavour.”

Cucubáno looked helplessly toward the stoical Indians who impassively regarded him.

“Cowardly women!” he grunted, and he turned sadly again to Garry.

“You will bring her back safe to me,” he counselled, placing his arm tenderly about Puna’s slim shoulders. “I give her into your keeping.”

Trap Farthing gazed happily up through the leaf-like fronds of the palm under which he lay. The black traceries of its branches blotted out in delicate silhouette the clustered myriads of stars, and a half moon, setting into the western sky, glinted silvery through the thick cluster of another group of palm trees farther away.

Trap scarcely dared move and, though his

left arm grew dead and numb under the weight of the sleeping Puna's head, he forebore to ease it, and his eyes, ever and again, turned to the regular features of the Indian girl as she lay, curled up between the two men, and he sighed blissfully.

The rugged heart of the ex-pirate had been unconditionally surrendered to this young girl of an alien race, and Garry marvelled at the transformation that a week in the maiden's company had affected in the speech and manner of his companion.

No more did he shout rollicking chanteys to the silent forest as they trudged through its startled depths. Not once during the past week had the man uttered a blasphemous oath whenever aught had occurred to disturb him—a sudden shower, the bite of an insect, the painful prick of a guasavara spine. His tongue was silent, save when he sang, in a remarkably sweet and tuneful voice, the half-forgotten songs of his native Devon, or when, aided by his amused and sympathetic master, he taught the girl simple words and phrases in his own tongue. So receptive was Puna's unspoiled mind that, once having heard a word she never forgot it and, by the end of the week, she was able to converse brokenly with her guardians in their own language.

Their journey through the forest and jungle

behind Azua up into the lonely mountains had been without incident. No human face had they seen in all their wandering though, from the sides and summits of the ranges along which they made their way toward the head-waters of the Ozama, they could descry, far, far out in the Caribbean, the sails of an occasional Spanish galleon or, mayhap, a slaver scuttling fearfully along the coast with its cargo of human misery. On one hot afternoon, shortly before the setting of the sun, the sharp eyes of Puna had discovered the sails of a multitude of ships, leagues distant on the southern horizon, and Garry's heart had contracted to the realisation that they were the vessels of Admiral William Penn. Next morning, however, nothing was vouchsafed his eager gaze save the blue immensity of the ocean, its orderly waves rolling silently over the Spanish Main.

Puna had scornfully ignored Garry's suggestion that she disguise herself as a boy, and she had set out from Cucubáno's camp, shortly after receiving her father's consent to her mission, garbed in the customary costume of the Indian maidens. Her long, black hair covered her shoulders and hung almost to her waist. About her hips, and extending to her knees, she wore a short skirt of soft agouti skins. For protection during the cold, mountain nights she wore, bandolier-fashion about her shoulders, a

long cape of the same material, a burden which she gracefully declined to allow the love-smitten Trap to carry for her.

Their way led them up the bank of the Neiba to its junction with the Cuevas, and along the almost dried bed of the latter stream they had made their way toward the high range of mountains in which the River Ozama had its source. Puna's reason for not adopting the more direct route to the capital, along the coast, was that there they ran too much risk of detection by the small bodies of Spanish troops which incessantly scoured the coast country for Indians and brigands. In the hinterland there was little traffic, and they had seen no human face save their own since they had left the Arawak band.

Puna had proved a lively and interesting companion. Her *naivete* and utter disregard of convention had at first shocked Garry and amused the somewhat embarrassed Trap Farthing; but, under the influence of her unsophisticated manner and artless behaviour, the two men came to look upon their young companion with affection—and Trap regarded her with absolute adoration.

On the occasion of their first night's camp Garry had fashioned a small shelter of branches and leaves and had made a soft bed for the girl of huge masses of Spanish moss, but when it was suggested that she retire therein alone, she

protested vehemently, and insisted that the two sheepish men share the snug retreat with her. It had been a most uncomfortable night for both Garry and Trap, for Puna was insistent, and neither of the two men had dared stir throughout the long hours lest they awaken the maiden. The following night no shelter was made and Puna again shared the rough bed with her companions. Henceforward the men accepted without demur the strange condition which life with the Arawak maiden engendered. To be sure, Trap and Garry gasped with dismay and regarded the girl with embarrassment when, one hot day, they came upon a circular pool of clear water at the foot of Mount Tina, and the maiden stripped off the scanty clothes that covered her and hurried, a naked brown nymph, into the cooling waters. To her demands that they join her in the pool the scandalised men turned a deaf ear and, with flushed faces, they regarded one another in miserable discomposure.

Trap's love for the little savage could not be disguised and Puna, reading his thoughts, made him her abject slave. On the third night of their journey, Trap had endeavoured to place a trembling arm about her sleeping body, but he was rewarded with a resounding slap on the ear that made that blushing member tingle and which caused Garry to chuckle amusedly to himself. But on this, the seventh night of

their wandering, Puna had snuggled close into Trap's delighted embrace and had rested her trusting head upon his shoulder. Hence the man's disinclination to remove the weight from his numbed arm though, from the shoulder down, there was no life in that member.

When the paling sky betokened the approach of dawn, Puna stirred and sat up. Trap gently turned so that his deadened arm was slowly dragged toward him and, after vigorous manipulation, during which Puna stared at him with questioning eyes, the man felt the warm flow of blood tingling in his fingers and he smiled into the maiden's dimly-seen face.

"Puna," he whispered, and he lovingly stroked the girl's hand. Garry Graeme sighed, half-turned, and his steady breathing showed that he slept soundly.

"Puna!" again entreated Trap, and he indicated with outspread arms that he wished the girl again to lay her head upon his shoulder. Puna smiled gently, but she did not resist when the man reached up and drew her warm little body close to his. "Puna, I love thee!"

The maiden said no word, but her arm crept up until it encircled the man's neck and she snuggled even closer to his yearning body. Against his neck her lips rested, and her hot breath intoxicated the happy man. Thus they lay when, an hour later, Garry sat up and looked

understandingly upon them, and he smiled and gently nudged his sleeping henchman.

"Bestir thyself, Trap," he cried. "The day is far advanced and we have a long journey ahead of us. Good-morrow, Puna," he said, as the girl turned sleepy eyes upon him. "Thou hast promised that this night we will set foot within the confines of Santo Domingo."

The girl smiled and then leaped swiftly to her feet. In a stream nearby she laved her face and then, aided by the adoring Trap, she set about preparing breakfast. The three travellers lived on the country; in that land of plenty was no lack of food and, so long as the ubiquitous plantain and banana failed them not, there was no occasion for worry as to where their next meal was to come from. On the low plateau upon which they were encamped was food in plenty and, before the sun had tipped the eastern mountains with purple, they were on their way.

Past the ancient ruins of Buenaventura, where Bartholomew Columbus had established a fortified post, the little party cautiously made its way. These ruins had, aforetime, sheltered a particularly villainous band of thieves and robbers and, though the bones of the brigands who had once infested it were as white and bleached as the scattered fragments of walls which reflected back the glare of the sun, the

Indian maiden breathed a sigh of relief only when the place had been left far behind.

On a small wooded hill, some three leagues from the Capital, the wayfarers rested that afternoon and from this vantage-point they watched the sun sink to rest far beyond the mountains of Barahona. As the darkness settled, and thick, evil-looking clouds poured over the distant hills behind them, Puna became nervous and restive, and her eyes kept turning back toward the purpling mountains.

"Thinkest thou that a storm brews?" asked Garry as a distant peal of thunder broke the sultry silence of the heated air.

Puna nodded her head and then, as a sudden stab of lightning leaped from peak to peak, she buried her head in Trap's bosom. When she raised it again she spoke directly to Garry.

"We must leave this hill," she said, and her wide eyes glanced back toward the massy thunder-clouds. "We could not live in this exposed place were the hurricane to overtake us here. We must make for the city!"

Far below them, and miles away, twinkled the lights of the Capital. The night was already dark and it promised to be Stygian before long. At Puna's earnest suggestion they continued their journey in the direction of the city and, three hours after they left the plateau whereon they had been temporarily encamped, the full fury of the hurricane burst

upon them and they cowered in the lee of a large rock until its initial fury should have spent itself.

They were but a short distance from the city walls when the storm overtook them, but it was near dawn before the bedraggled and half-drowned mortals finally reached the massive fortifications. In the incessant glare of the lightning Puna found the spot, below one of the bastions, which she sought. No soldier challenged them as they walked below the walls, and the rounded sentry-box, which jutted from the wall immediately over the spot where Puna finally paused, was deserted. No man living would voluntarily face the fury of that tempest, and in the guard-houses the awed Spanish soldiery listened to the howl of the elements.

The girl felt about the face of the masonry with exploring fingers and her companions watched her actions curiously. The force of the gale was such that Garry had to brace his body against Puna's so that she might not be blown away, and Trap, leaning against his musket, held tight to her unoccupied arm.

"The maid must be mistaken," shouted Garry to Trap, his mouth pressed close against the other's ear. "There be no opening here that a mouse could crawl into!"

Trap pointed his head against the wind so that the brim of his sodden hat curled tight about his face.

“She knows what she be about, master,” he bellowed. “She—Od’s Blood! The wall is crumbling!”

Garry’s eyes opened as wide as Trap’s as a huge slab of rock slowly moved under the girl’s hands and disclosed a square black opening into which the maiden cautiously thrust her head. Her body followed and, in response to her beckoning hand, the two men entered the cavern after her. The tunnel into which they had penetrated was low, and scarce wide enough for them to sit abreast. Dark as it was before, the sudden swinging of the stone back into position left them in pitchy blackness, and neither Trap nor Garry dared move for fear of sudden pitfalls in the passage before them.

“Will you strike a light, señor?” asked the girl as she felt about in the darkness and located her companion. “I know not in what direction the tunnel winds.”

Garry felt about his clothes and produced his flint and steel. Behind the stone rampart of their prison the thunder grumbled and growled incessantly.

“I cannot!” gasped the Scotsman, and a sudden fear assailed him. “I can do nought but produce the spark. See—the tow is wet and will not ignite!”

DARKNESS closed about Joan like a material thing and the heavy closeness of the night made the exertion of running intolerable. She stopped beside a bush in the garden; a bush whose mass she could not see, but whose thickly-limbed branches held her panting body erect as she collapsed against it, and whose blossoms gave forth a cloyingly sweet odour.

Behind her torches gleamed in the darkness, paling at times as broad sheets of lightning swept across the cloud-scudded sky, but ever coming nearer. A sob choked her as she swayed against the gentle support of the flowering bush and, her great fear lending strength to her bruised and tired body, she dashed madly toward where, in the infinitesimal time during which a flash of lightning lasted, she had seen the outlines of a gate.

Low vines caught her ankles and tripped her, but she sprang to her feet. A thorny bush clung to and tore her clothing, and she desperately wrenched herself free and, as she half turned, it seemed that her pursuers were close behind her. In hopeless despair she lunged forward into the darkness—her head came in violent

contact with the solid stone wall and she sank, whimpering softly, into unconsciousness.

And over the silent city the swift-flying scud spread like the mobile vanguard of a ravishing army. The deathly silence was unbroken save for the slamming of a storm shutter and the nervous chatter of the apprehensive sentries who advanced reluctantly through the garden. The lightning was closer now and the swift flash of the darting bolt was followed quickly by the crashing turbulence of the thunder. Earth and all things living cringed in a dreadful silence following each ebullition of the storm-God's wrath—and then, from the hurricane-swept reaches of the distant forest, sounded a horrible sibilance—a giant's whisper, which momentarily grew in volume. Joan opened her eyes and gazed wonderingly up into the torch-lighted countenances which were bending over her and, as she rose to her feet, supported by the strong arms of a sympathetic soldier, she swayed with dizziness so that the frightened Spaniards, their ears attuned to the menace of the rapidly approaching hurricane, hurriedly lifted her up and carried her toward the lighted door from which she had a few moments before made her escape.

The whisper rose in shrilling crescendo to a scream; the scream deepened to a wailing shriek and, with a pandemonium of wind, rain and noise, the strength of the cyclone burst full upon them.

Joan's torpid sensibilities were roused by the dash of the beating rain against her face, and such was the force of the wind that she nearly strangled as the three soldiers who bore her toward the building were overthrown by the force of the storm's beginning. It was a badly bruised and battered quartette who finally dragged their drenched bodies through the open doorway and, though the hurricane shook the solid edifice with the sullen strength of an earthquake, the four gasping creatures felt an immeasurable sense of security behind the thick stone walls of the ancient building.

Hurrying figures scurried down the long hall, their torches flickering fitfully in the blast that blew through the open doorway, and ahead of the torch-bearers strode Peñalva, his curious eyes regarding the bedraggled figure of the woman who had fled to escape the wrath of his consort. The Governor was still drunk, as was evinced by the manner in which he carefully felt for support as he sneered down upon the staring woman, and he shouted an order to the sentries who had captured her which could not be heard above the roar of the tempest outside.

With an oath Peñalva repeated his command but, though his lips moved and his face grew apoplectic, no sound could be heard above the clamour from without. He grasped the collar of the unfortunate wretch nearest him and

drawing his heavily-booted foot back, he smote the poor wretch with all his force so that the soldier fell, writhing, to the stone-flagged pavement of the big hall.

“Lie there, carrion!” screamed Peñalva, unheard, to the groaning soldier. “When I command that thou closest the door thou’lt not wait to hear my order repeated!”

And, as though his voice had carried to the screaming elements, and they, through apprehensive pity of the white-faced soldiers who stared trembling at their master, hastened to obey his will—a backward gust from within the building slammed the great door to, and Peñalva’s angry voice could be heard in the comparative quiet which resulted.

This was indeed a different Peñalva to the one whom Joan had visualised through his early courtesy and consideration to her, and she shuddered as she looked from the bestial face of the angry man to the limp form of the now unconscious foot-soldier. She remembered how her black servant, Agatha, had shrugged her shoulders on that first day when Joan had expressed her surprised opinion of the Governor’s courtesy, and the thought of the faithful creature of her own sex, who could at least comfort her in this hour of agony and dread, instilled in her a great longing for her company, and she groaned her name aloud.

Peñalva looked curiously at the girl as she

crouched dumbly against the wall, her breast heaving with the intensity of her emotions and the natural reaction from her struggle against the force of the storm. Upon her brow a purple mark stood out lividly—and she mechanically pressed her trembling fingers to the spot which had been bruised when she had collided with the wall.

“ ’Tis a small blemish, little love-bird,” grunted Peñalva in his native tongue as he observed the action. “ But ’twill not spoil the beauty of your body for me, your lover.”

Joan understood not the meaning of the words, but the tone in which they were uttered, the lascivious look which was bestowed upon her, and the nervous grins upon the faces of the respectful soldiers told her of their significance, and she shivered.

“ Thou’rt cold,” continued the Governor, advancing uncertainly toward her, and he placed a proprietary hand upon her shoulder. “ In my room is a fire blazing before which thou canst dry thy lithesome body. Come, querida, I’ll take thee thither.”

The girl shrank back against the wall, and she looked with aversion upon the heavily-ringed fingers which clutched her bruised shoulder. But though she endeavoured to protest, her lips would not form the words she wished to utter, nor would the man before her have understood their import had she been able to speak.

“What! Thou’lt not come willingly!” cried Peñalva. “Then thou’lt come by force, forsooth! Gomez—Rodriguez! Seize that woman and bear her to my room!”

And the resisting girl was propelled, stumbling, along the hall and up the broad stairs, her puny strength availing her nothing against that of the two soldiers who supported her. Behind her the grinning governor followed and, in his footsteps, the remainder of the men on guard who carried the unconscious form of the man who had incurred Peñalva’s displeasure.

A door was thrown open and Joan was shoved into the room. She staggered a pace and sank to her knees but before she could rise to her feet the door behind her was slammed to and she knew, without turning her head, that Peñalva stood leering upon her.

“So thou desirest not my attentions, little spit-cat,” he purred. “Thou wouldst run from thy benefactor without repaying him for his kindness to thee? I could not bear to think thee an ingrate, querida. Wilt shew thy gratitude to me now?”

Joan covered her face with her hands. The Governor addressed her in Spanish, but she had been a fool had she not understood his meaning. The man’s arm encircled her bowed shoulders—and she dashed it away.

“Ho, ho!” laughed Peñalva viciously.

“Thou’rt still full of fight, my beauty! I had thought that perhaps Adèle——”

The building shook to the roar of the wind, and the muffled boom of thunder drowned his voice for a moment.

“Adèle—Adèle——” muttered Peñalva, and his bloodshot eyes narrowed vindictively. He had been caught unawares by the French-woman and he gritted his teeth as he thought on how supinely he had slunk from her outraged presence what time she had discovered Joan Manvers struggling in his arms.

“I will show her!” he whispered thickly, drunkenly irritated that he should have been so submissive to the woman’s feelings. “I will teach her to spy upon me!” he muttered.

He walked to the door and unbolted it. In answer to his stentorian shout a soldier hastily answered him and hurried to do his master’s bidding. The man despatched upon his errand, Peñalva leaned against the lintel and with calculating eyes surveyed the pallid figure of his victim as he waited for Adèle to appear. Joan’s gaze never left his face, and the stupefied look of terror which filled her wide blue eyes would have elicited compassion from a basilisk.

But Peñalva had nought of pity in his heart for his intended victim. Blinded by his own lusts he gazed upon the girl with liquorish exultation as his eyes took in the slender curves

and lines of the girl's supple form and found them pleasing.

"Thou desirest speech with me, Bernardino?" asked a voice from the doorway, and Adèle de Pencier entered the room, unaware for the moment that any person save the Governor occupied it. She closed her eyes in terror as a thunderclap more violent than its fellows echoed boisterously from without and she hurriedly crossed herself.

"I am terrified of the storm, Bernardino!" she gasped, grasping the man's arm. "Why didst thou not let me rest?"

"You have been weeping," brusquely stated the Governor, shaking himself from her grasp. This woman had grown suddenly distasteful to him, and Adèle, through red-rimmed eyes, saw the look of aversion with which he was regarding her and she pressed her hands against her breast.

"What is it, Bernardino?" she asked tremulously. "What if I have been weeping? Why dost thou look at me in that manner?—Oh—!"

The ejaculation escaped her lips as she noticed for the first time that the Governor was not alone. Instantly her demeanour changed and her eyes blazed. The hands which had been so supplicatingly held against her breast, now doubled themselves and her lips tightened as she turned and faced Joan Manvers.

“ I thought you perished in the storm ! ” she cried, in English, her voice mounting with her growing rage. “ What do you here ? Have you again been trying to take my Bernardino from me ? ”

She started toward the cowering Joan, who buried her face in her hands, but Peñalva stepped in front of the infuriated woman and barred her way.

“ Do not lay hands upon the girl ! ” he commanded brusquely. “ And remember that it is my desire that you moderate the tone of your voice when you address my little wild Orange-blossom. I know not what you may be saying to her, but it is my wish and my command that you bridle your tongue ! ”

Adèle stepped back and her eyes narrowed as she looked Pevalva in the face.

“ Thy ‘ little Orange-blossom,’ forsooth ! ” she almost screamed. “ I will show the jade that she cannot supplant me in thine affections. Let me go, Bernardino ! ” she sobbed. “ Let me—— ! ”

Peñalva caught her by the wrist and twisted it so that the woman spun around and fell to her knees facing him. The excruciating pain of his torturing grip caused her face to blanch, but her wild eyes balefully regarded the silent Englishwoman who still crouched against the wall.

“ Thou art causing me grievous pain, Bernar-

dino," moaned Adèle. "Please to unhand me that I may drive this interloper away!"

"Silence!" roared Peñalva in a passion. "Still your unruly tongue or I'll break your wrist!"

He increased the pressure upon the girl's arm until she fell back, her face contorted in agony.

"This Englishwoman is no interloper!" he continued. "Nor has she sought to thrust her attentions upon me. On the contrary, it was I who brought her to this room, much against her will and it was I who sent for you, Adèle de Pencier, that you might interpret for me as I tell this young woman of my ardent feeling toward her."

It was not the pain of her released wrist that caused the blood to leave Adèle's face as she rose to her feet and dumbly regarded her paramour. The man looked coldly at her, albeit the corners of his mouth quirked up a little as a scornful smile struggled for expression. The sight of his erstwhile mistress writhing before him in agony was gratifying to Peñalva's warped soul and drunken state of mind. He might repent of his harshness later, but for the present, the desire to wound this helpless creature, whose every thought was of him and who, in her strange way, was faithful only to him, and who looked not upon another man . . . this desire was almost as great as the passionate urge to possess himself of the other girl's fragile and delicate beauty.

"Thou, Bernardino," she whimpered, clasping her hands and wringing them as she looked beseechingly up into the man's hard face. "Tell me, my lover—my man—that thou dost not love this—this woman! Tell me that she has, for the nonce, turned thy head and that thou still lovest thy Adélecita! Bernardino—Bernardino——!"

Peñalva snarled contemptuously.

"Have done with your hysterical maunderings!" he roughly commanded, purposely addressing her in the formal second person. "Tell our little friend that this room is hers, and that I will be most assiduous as to her comfort during the time she shares it with me."

"Ah, no, no, Bernardino, mine own!" pleaded Adèle impassionedly. "Do not ask me to do this! Only let me tell her that she may go to her own quarters and I'll not permit my tongue to speak ungraciously of her! Oh, Mother of God! Listen to me, Bernardino!"

"You will do as I command!" growled the man in a drunken rage, seizing the girl by her long, black hair and dragging her by main force toward the shrinking Englishwoman. "There!" he snarled, throwing her from him so that she had to cling to the other girl for support. "Do as I tell you or, by the Virgin, I'll send you to the kitchens!"

Joan could not understand the meaning of the scene of which she was an unwilling witness,

but the genuine distress of the other woman as she clung weakly to the dazed Englishwoman's arm roused in her gentle nature the deepest pity, and despite the fact that a bare half-hour before she had run in terror from this selfsame woman, she tenderly put her arms about the grief-stricken figure and stared, fearful, through misty eyes at the stern figure of Don Bernardino de Menestes y Bracamonte.

"I—I cannot, Bernardino," moaned Adèle, and she uttered a pitiful cry as Peñalva roughly tore her away from Joan and stood between them.

"Then begone!" commanded Peñalva through clenched teeth. "Go to the kitchens—and await the pleasure of the servants there!"

He turned his back upon the girl and looked down at Joan. She hung her head and closed her eyes, her heart thumping violently. For a brief moment the three actors in the little drama were silent and the howling of the storm rose to a crescendo of fury. Then the Governor laughed coarsely, placed an arm about the shrinking shoulders of the Scotswoman, and tilted her head up with his other hand so that his penetrative gaze fell upon her upturned face.

"Thou art a thousandfold more beautiful than Adèle," he whispered. "Adèle has lost the bloom of youth—Va!—she is stale! You shall take her place, little Inglesa—and we shall be happy together—you and I."

Joan's ashen face grew more pallid still and her trembling limbs suddenly ceased to support her. For the second time that night consciousness left her and she recked not that Peñalva smothered her cold lips with caresses and that he held her limp body tightly to him—Joan had fainted.

The man frowned in a puzzled manner as the little body in his arms grew heavy and lifeless and he heeded not the broken sobs of the scorned woman who slowly moved toward the door. Lifting the swooning girl in his arms the Governor staggered across the room and laid her gently down upon a couch and his eyes grew thoughtful and the angry colour left his face as he regarded the pathetic little form.

"Ave Maria, santísima!—she is dead!" he murmured uneasily and he backed nervously away from the recumbent figure; but Joan stirred upon the couch and the colour came back by degrees to her bruised face. She opened her eyes and made as though to arise.

"Bernardino!" came the pleading whisper from the open doorway. "Bernardino!—say that thou wilt take me back! I cannot live without thy love!—I cannot—Oh, Jesu Cristo, I cannot!"

Peñalva uttered an impatient exclamation and spat viciously toward the door.

"Are you deaf, women!" he cried relentlessly. "Did you not hear my command!"

Begone!—Go to the kitchens!—Go anywhere, so long as you trouble me no more!”

The door slowly closed and Peñalva's choler subsided as he stared at the spot upon which the woman had stood. Mayhap a twinge of conscience smote him; mayhap for him the white face of the heart-broken girl was still limned against the dark, wooden portal. Be that as it may, his expression was almost contrite as he turned again to the maid upon the couch, who sat up with hopeless resignation in her weary eyes.

For long minutes, while the storm raged outside and the girl stared apathetically up at him, the Governor soberly regarded her. Finally he pulled himself together with an effort and, going to the door, gave an order to one of the guards who was stationed in the corridor. In a few moments the black face of the frightened Agatha appeared and Peñalva addressed himself to her.

“You will escort your mistress to her room,” he said. “See to it that her wet clothes are immediately shed and that her bed is dry. Go then, and see that she receives the best of attention.”

Joan regarded the familiar face of her maid-servant with anxiety as the negress beckoned smilingly to her. She glanced indecisively toward Peñalva as he bowed in assent to her unasked question. Trembling in every limb,

the girl accepted the Governor's arm and together the black woman and the white walked slowly up the torch-lighted corridor.

Left to himself, the Governor walked to the high, shuttered window and tore open the sash. For a long time he gazed out into the night, unmindful of the hurricane which made him grasp firmly the iron bars of the window. His staring eyes saw nought of the storm, and the moisture upon his cheeks was not wholly due to the rain which occasionally spat into the room.

And under the frowning walls of the Homenage, the ancient stone tower in which it is said the First Admiral was imprisoned, the broken heart of Adèle de Pencier was forever stilled—and only early gulls, foraging at the mouth of the swollen Ozama, knew the manner of her death.

For two days following the hurricane Joan was confined to her bed. The strain of that awful night had sapped her strength, and a fever racked her body. Agatha, the faithful, attended to the wants of her mistress, and under her tender care the girl was enabled to rise from her bed on the morning of the fourth day and to sit in the warm sun on the balcony overlooking the gardens.

Beneath a cloudless sky they lay refreshed and beautiful and, save for gaping white wounds upon the boles of the larger trees, where huge

limbs had been wrenched off, they showed no signs of the recent storm. But unroofed houses and shutterless windows in the district lying about the Governor's palace were a vivid reminder of the fury of the tempest, and Joan shuddered whenever she gazed upon these visible evidences of the terrible occasion.

The fragrant odour of the exotic jessamine still rose upon the warm morning air, and the birds, patiently repairing the damage that had been wrought upon their airy shelters, still sang sweetly, so that the girl's naturally happy and care-free disposition soon reasserted itself.

Peñalva was absent upon a tour of inspection throughout the island. The hurricane had done great damage, not only in the capital city, but in other places as well, and the toll of death and destruction was tremendous. Joan dreaded his return, for she knew that upon another occasion he would not allow his better nature to thwart his desires of the moment. That Adèle de Pencier was responsible for this sudden change of front she was well aware, and though the memory of the woman's vengeful face and her hysterical denunciation of her innocent self often rose before her eyes, she half wished that she might visit her again . . . for she had much to say to her and she longed to hear once more the sound of her native tongue. She was never to know of the unfortunate Frenchwoman's

desperate deed, and though the Governor suspected that the rash woman had destroyed herself, he never had the melancholy satisfaction of knowing what had become of her. Adèle de Pencier's body was not cast upon the shore . . . for sharks are numerous in those tropical waters.

Upon Peñalva's return to Santo Domingo city he sent to Joan's quarters a young black woman, a native of Virginia, who, like Agatha, had been taken from a captured English vessel. This young girl, with the facility of the black, had quickly learned the language of her captors and had made herself useful on more than one occasion by interpreting between the officials of the Inquisition and their hapless victims, a duty in which the abandoned negress had taken much pleasure. Unlike Agatha, she had been a willing convert to the Roman Church—though she could little appreciate the beauties and mysticism of that ancient faith—and, being little better than a savage herself, she had found her distressful responsibilities very much to her liking. The wench presented herself before Joan one morning and, sneering insolently at the perturbed Agatha, she addressed herself to the Englishwoman.

“De Governor gwine take you to Baní dis coming Sunday,” she said, not deigning to curtsy to the white woman before she spoke to her.

“Indeed!” replied Joan, lifting her eyebrows and staring the impertinent young negress out of

countenance. Her heart beat violently at the information, but she showed neither in look nor manner that the news perturbed her. "Did he—did the Governor tell you to inform me of this fact?"

The negress nodded sullenly, her eyes down-cast in unwilling bidding to the direct gaze of the white woman.

Joan's chest heaved and she silently regarded the negress. A slight action on the part of Agatha attracted her attention, and she intercepted a warning signal on the part of her servant. Agatha held an admonitory finger to her lips, and her eyes eloquently told her mistress to have heed to her words.

"It is well," said Joan to the newcomer. "Agatha and I will be ready to obey the Governor's pleasure on Sunday."

The interpreter cast a malevolent look toward the scowling Agatha.

"Dat black wench not comin'," she said, and the corners of her nose were raised in contempt as she deliberately turned her back upon the white woman and insolently surveyed the other negress. Then, with a grunt of disdain, she walked out of the room and banged the door noisily behind her.

Joan's eyes opened wide in hopeless ineptitude as she gazed with sinking heart into the sympathetic eyes of her black companion.

“ Oh, Agatha,” she moaned, her mask of indifference thrown to the winds. “ What shall I do, Agatha! I cannot—I *will* not take the place of that other woman! God! Why was I not left to my fate with—with my husband!”

She threw herself face down upon the bed and buried her head in despair amongst the coverlets. She saw in imagination the bodies of her husband and her lover cast up by the sea upon a golden shore, and she longed to be as they were.

“ Garry! Garry!” she sobbed, her uttered thoughts forming the name of him she loved. “ Ah, Garry, mine own—would that I, too, were at rest!”

And in her paroxysm of despair she noted not that the faithful Agatha respectfully shook her by the shoulder until, aroused by the black girl’s pathetic attempts to address her, she sat up and regarded the other woman through tear-filled eyes.

Agatha’s face worked contortedly as she uttered hideous sounds which bore absolutely no resemblance to human speech. Joan sat up and gazed at her for a space until, overcome with pity at the poor creature’s attempts to converse with her, she forgot for the nonce her own troubles and bade the black woman sit upon the bed beside her.

“ What is it, Agatha?” she whispered. “ Dost thou know of some plan whereby we may circumvent Peñalva’s desires?”

Agatha nodded eagerly and going to the open window she raised herself on tiptoes and pointed far off into the blue distance of the mountains.

“ Art thou pointing to Baní ? ”

Agatha shook her head decidedly.

“ Does escape for us lie in that direction ? ”

The black woman's head nodded energetically and her eyes glistened with delight at the other's quick comprehension.

“ But how can we ever get away from here ? ” objected Joan, the ready tears starting to well in her eyes again. “ We are helpless. It would not be possible for me to pass the sentries another time.”

Agatha's useless mouth opened again and her mutilated tongue endeavoured to form the words which would convey her meaning to the white woman. Finally, she sighed in despair and turned to the window. She uttered an unintelligible exclamation and beckoned to her mistress to come quickly to the window. Joan did as she desired and looked out upon the gardens with expectant gaze.

“ What is it, Agatha ? ” she whispered.
“ What seest thou ? ”

Agatha pointed toward the palace entrance and Joan looked in the direction to see what it was that had so excited the other.

“ I see nought but a nun walking slowly up the path,” she said, a shade of disappointment

in the tones of her voice. "How can she assist us?"

Agatha's eyes gleamed and she fairly danced with excitement. She pointed excitedly toward the nun and back again to her mistress.

"Will she aid us in escaping from this place?" questioned Joan doubtfully, and then, as Agatha went through an eloquent pantomime, a look of comprehension illumined her countenance.

"Must I dress as a nun?" she asked.

Agatha's eyes shone with delight and she quickly nodded her head.

"And canst thou obtain for me a wimple and a gown?"

The negress nodded in the affirmative and pointed again toward the distance.

"Hast thou a friend here who will aid us?"

A nod.

"A black person like thyself?"

Agatha beamed.

"Is it another English slave who has access to the clothing of the Sisters?" asked Joan with keen intuition, and she gasped with sudden hope when the negress showed her that her guess was correct.

"And she can secure for me the habiliments of a nun?"

Agatha's smile as she disappeared through the doorway, intent upon attending to her mistress's dinner, was answer enough.

This was Wednesday; during the following three days Joan had many one-sided conversations with the faithful Agatha and on Saturday the black woman brought to her mistress the complete dress of a nun, which Joan hid securely under the feather mattress of her bed against the time when she should use it.

Peñalva, accompanied by the leering black woman, had visited Joan in her apartment during one of the days that intervened before she should make her projected flight from the palace and, to his politely phrased remarks anent the desirability of Baní as a place of residence, she vouchsafed no comment whatsoever.

"I shall not use force to induce you to accompany me," said the Governor, and his remarks were roughly translated by the black woman. "You must of your own volition consent to change your residence.

"Ah, you will come," he continued as he noticed the half smile that played about the girl's lips as he addressed her. "Means will be found, if you appear unwilling, which will open your lips and allow me to hear the words that I wish to hear."

Joan continued silent, and Peñalva, an equivocal smile playing about his thin lips, regarded the woman through half-closed eyes and then, motioning to the grinning servant to precede him, he left the room.

The city was silent and the palace grounds were shrouded in the darkness of night when Joan attempted her escape. Agatha had not failed her and she was on hand at the proper time to assist her mistress don the costume which was to be her disguise. Thus it was that as the guards, with much bustle and ceremony, were changed by an officious sergeant, the Governor's unwilling prisoner crouched amid the deeper shadows of the hall as she waited with beating heart and fevered face the relief of the sentries.

When the sergeant had finally marched off the old guard, and the new sentries had settled down to their duties, Joan mustered her courage and, with stately step and slow, her hands folded upon her breast, she walked sedately past the guard at the palace entrance.

She acknowledged his salutation with a demure nod of the head and a few moments later the sentry at the garden gate challenged her, peered intently at her by the light of a flambeau, and allowed her to pass him. He looked uncertainly after her as she walked with nervous tread into the darkened street. It was not until she had passed a corner of the garden wall and the light of the sentry's torch was eclipsed that her breath came freely.

And now, where was Agatha ?

The black girl had pointed to the far corner of the garden when she had left her mistress

after bringing her the disguise, and Joan nervously edged into the deeper shadows below the wall as she waited for the welcome sight of her accomplice.

From a black, velvet canopy the tropic stars shone down upon her, and as her eyes became accustomed to the gloom, near-by objects stood out distinctly. A faint rustling in the grass and the smaller bushes told her of the fearsome insects of the night which encompassed her; tarantulas, centipedes and scorpions . . . her blood ran cold as she remembered the stories she had heard of these horrors. Crouched against the warm stones of the high wall she drew her skirt tight about her legs and earnestly prayed that Agatha would not be long in coming.

Arose a sudden challenge from the direction of the palace. The call was repeated, and then the crackling roar of a musket split the night, followed by ghastly sounds as of some creature in agony. Joan pressed her hands against her mouth as the pitiful, gurgling wail rose and fell in horrible outcry, and her heart appeared to contract within her breast as she realised that the faithful Agatha's flight had been discovered and that her own plight was almost as desperate as that of the hapless black woman. But cold horror and the strain of nerves almost at the breaking-point held her motionless, and her feet, even though she knew not which way to

flee, would not obey her will. In a dull, apathetic way she wondered dumbly if Agatha were dead, and dazedly watched the white walls of a tiny house opposite the garden gate growing brighter and brighter until, with a start, she realised that the light was that from a number of torches which the roused sentries carried. Weakly she turned and staggered away from the wall, past the rotting vegetation along the river's edge, and into the darkness of a foul-smelling street.

The lights behind her burst into view as her pursuers emerged from the gate, and her white face must have been plain against the gloom as she glanced affrightedly back, for a yell arose as she looked toward the flaming torches and swift feet pattered upon the cobbled street behind her.

Joan was gasping and her weary feet stumbled upon the uneven pavement as the foremost of the pursuing soldiers overtook her. She heard his panting breath and almost felt the clutch of his hand upon her shoulder as she darted, sobbing, into a space between the two buildings.

The baffled soldier cursed as he checked his speed and rushed after the girl, and she, stumbling forward, hands extended, suddenly shrieked as her groping fingers came in contact with a human body—that of a man who grunted his surprise as she collided with him. The flaming torch, held high by the perspiring guard, blazed

full upon the features of the person into whose arms Joan had rushed and, when she looked up into his staring face, her own grew even more ashen and she gave a startled gasp of recognition as the man's arms closed about her.

X

The Galleries of Colón

GARRY finally desisted from his efforts to strike a light. The charred lint would not take the sparks which he frantically struck into it and, in despair of ever penetrating the awesome tunnel in which they were imprisoned, the two men placed their backs against the rock which had closed the entrance behind them and tried unavailingly to move the heavy stone so that they might make their escape from the close confines of the walled passage.

But try as they would they could not budge the stone. Puna passed trembling hands over its surface in an endeavour to find the counterpart to the steel bar which unlocked it on its outer surface, but her efforts were as vain as those of her companions'. At length, as the muffled peals of thunder grew ever fainter and they knew that day had dawned, the three huddled figures, clustered together for warmth, sank one by one to sleep and, though a hot sun followed the hurricane and bathed the

shaken island in the heat of its rays, the tired wanderers knew it not.

The sun had made a complete circuit and another day had dawned before Puna awakened and blinked wonderingly in the blackness. No single streak of light illumined the gallery and the darkness was as intense as though it were the dead of night outside the walls. Awakened by her urgent nudging the two men awoke, and the travellers discussed in whispers the alarming situation that confronted them.

"There remains but one thing to do," decided Garry at length, and though Puna understood very little of what he said when he spoke in English she quickly caught the drift of his remarks. "We must follow this tunnel to whithersoever it leads. We cannot open the door by which we entered, and it stands to reason that the Indians who have used this passage-way found some means of exit."

"They had lights, or the means of procuring them," replied Trap morosely. "But lead on, Master Garry. My tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth for water, and my innards are as insensible as a Don's conscience."

"I am hungry, too," returned the other, "and until we find an outlet to this passage-way we must fain tighten our belts. What of thee, Puna?" he asked in Spanish. "Art thou hungry also?"

"I have been many times hungrier than I am now," she returned patiently. "But let us go on that we may find the end of this passage."

Garry rose to a stooping position, for the low ceiling would not permit of his standing upright and, with cautious steps, he moved slowly forward, his arms extended so that the tips of his fingers brushed the walls on either side.

Behind him followed his companions, Trap grasping the skirt of his master's coat and Puna clutching the ex-pirate's hand. Thus they moved forward, slowly and with infinite caution until Garry, standing straight to ease the pain in his back, found that the ceiling was higher than he could reach with the extended hand.

"Methinks we are in some manner of chamber," he said, and his voice reverberated roundly. "The wall curves here to the left and the other wall has gone utterly from my reach."

"I like it not," quoth Trap uneasily as he reluctantly followed in the footsteps of the other. "I would that we had never entered this place!"

"Then leave me to continue alone," suggested Garry. "Do ye both await my return at this spot."

Trap shuddered.

"I'll not leave you, sir," he said, and the very earnestness of the tone of his voice made Garry smile. "I am sore afraid of this dark

hole and, with your indulgence, we'll continue to follow after."

Garry continued his careful exploration until, satisfied that they had entered a circular chamber and that by following the wall they would again arrive at the passage they had just left, he gruffly insisted that his companions stay where they were while he thoroughly explored the chamber.

Leaving the unwilling Trap tight-clutching the hand of the Indian maid, Garry continued alone along the wall until he came to the spot where, as he had surmised, the gallery opened out upon the circular chamber. Orienting himself by means of the narrow walls, he slowly shuffled out toward the centre of the vault, advancing inches at a time. The stertorous breathing of his nervous comrade guided him and, when he was just opposite the spot where Trap and Puna awaited him, his extended foot poised over nothingness.

He jerked himself back and lay flat upon the stone floor, extending his arms as he slowly wormed his way forward again upon his stomach. His fingers clutched the brink of a pit and he slowly crawled around the edge of it until he was satisfied that the chasm was a well, down which he and his companions might have plunged to their deaths. He leaned over the edge of the circular pit and extended his arm

as far down its smooth, stone-lined wall as he could reach. His fingers clutched the empty air.

Five minutes later the little party was feeling its way back along the tunnel through which they had entered the chamber of the well, when Puna uttered an ejaculation and dropped to her knees.

"What is it?" asked Garry anxiously as Trap jerked at his coat.

"'Tis the entrance of another passage-way," replied the Arawak maiden. "A low opening, close to the floor. I will crawl in first and do ye come after."

And before either of the two men could utter a protest she had crawled through the opening she had discovered and was eagerly importuning them to follow. Trap waited until Garry had crawled through the narrow entrance and he followed at his heels.

"It is another chamber," exclaimed Garry as he rose to his feet and shuffled cautiously about. "Have great care of your footsteps that ye do not fall into a pit!"

His foot struck something soft and crumbly and he stooped down to ascertain what it might be. It appeared to be a huge, square timber of rotten wood and at touch of the friable material he uttered a delighted exclamation and felt for his flint and steel. The charred lint was now dry and he soon had a small fire blazing in the centre of the chamber and, though the blaze was

but a tiny one, the unaccustomed though grateful light proved very trying to the eyes.

The room in which they found themselves was a small, square chamber of about twenty feet along the sides. Its roof or ceiling was about eight feet from the floor and, for the larger part, it was piled high with massive baulks of timber, stored there by the indefatigable Spaniards who had acknowledged the Columbuses as their leaders. The wood was so rotten that it crumbled to the touch but, being pine, hundreds of pitchy knots lay embedded in the flaky wood, the sight of which caused Garry's eyes to shine with delight.

"We need not lack for light now, friend Trap," gloated Garry as he picked up the nearest knot and kindled it at the flame of the tiny fire. The wood sputtered for a moment and then a bright, smoky flame rose from it. Garry carefully extinguished the small blaze so that their stock of torches might not be consumed and selecting half-a-dozen of the largest knots and bidding Trap do likewise, he crawled again through the narrow opening and made his way down the tunnel toward the spot where they had entered.

But their efforts at finding a way out were fraught with failure. At Puna's suggestion they made their way again toward the circular chamber in the centre of which lay the pit which Garry had discovered. Past the entrance

to the little store-room they went in single file and out into the circular chamber, whose circumference appeared to have shrunk as they viewed it by the light of their torch. In the centre of this room yawned a black hole and the three people cautiously approached it as though from its depths might spring a monster of hideous mien.

"Gadzooks!" cried Garry as they approached the pit. "'Tis a staircase, Trap! A circular staircase—down which we might have made our way ere this!"

Trap gazed in stupefaction at the stone steps which circled about the side of the well, and his jaw dropped.

"But, master," he finally said. "Had we discovered this stairway Puna might never have found the room of the torches. So perhaps it was just as well we made this out to be a bottomless pit."

"Aye, 'twas as well," replied Garry. "But follow me—we'll find out where this leads to."

In solemn file they slowly descended the steps, which gave into another, larger tunnel, or gallery, twenty-five feet below the level of the circular chamber above. The walls of this gallery, unlike those on the upper level, were damp and covered with a slimy moss. The air was foetid and heavy and the shining eyes of tiny, loathsome creatures reflected back the

light of the burning torch from the dark recesses of the tunnel.

The gallery curved downwards and then up, and in the lowest part of the tunnel the walls and ceiling exuded moisture which drip-dripped on the damp and porous stone floor like the ticking of a clock. As their path circled here and there, but ever in an upward direction, it became drier. In several places along the gallery other smaller tunnels diverged from it, but Garry led his companions straight along the main branch. The hard floor was in many places covered with rotting pieces of timber, making the task of carrying their supply of pine-knots quite unnecessary; but both men were reluctant to drop their burden though their arms wearied from bearing their heavy load. Finally, Garry dropped his armful of knots and sat down upon the dry packed earth of the tunnel to rest. The others did likewise.

“This passage is tedious long,” sighed Trap as he resignedly threw himself to the ground. Puna said nothing, but she licked her dry lips and stared apathetically at the smoke-tipped flame of the torch.

“There is a breeze in this passage,” remarked Garry, observing that the flame from his lighted knot bent decidedly in the direction they were travelling, and that the thick, oily smoke rolled

slowly along the roof. "Perchance we'll find food and water eftsoons."

Shortly after they had resumed their wanderings they entered another low-ceiled chamber which appeared to spread interminably on all sides and revealed to their astonished gaze a multitude of groined arches which supported the heavy roof above. That they had stumbled upon the crypt of a church was Garry's assumption, an idea that was borne out by events which followed.

"Hark, master," enjoined Trap as they examined with curious eyes the massive foundations of the building under which they were standing. "Do you not hear a sound as of some person moaning? Od's fish! I would I were out of this!"

A low mumbling, a trembling diapason of sound, swelled through the arched corridors and, for the nonce, Garry listened in superstitious awe. Puna clung, trembling, to the frightened ex-pirate and her black eyes widened in fear.

"The Devil!" muttered Garry.

"Aye, the Devil it is, master!" quavered Trap.

"Chut! Hold thy silly tongue!" was Garry's sharp reply and he held his head in an attitude of listening as the rumbling cadences swelled and died away.

"'Tis the chanting of priests and the sound of

people's voices," he whispered. "We stand beneath the cathedral, and above us is being celebrated the Mass."

The three people stood in silence for a space, and Garry crossed himself, whereat Trap regarded him with quizzical expression.

"Is not that the sign of the accursed Papists, master?" he asked.

Garry smiled as he nodded his head.

"Aye, Trap, it is the symbol of the Christian religion—the cross upon which the Saviour died."

Trap stared uncomprehendingly.

"But—but why should you perform the idolatrous act? You are no Papist."

"Thou art in error, my friend. I am of the same faith as the Spaniards who worship overhead."

Trap scratched his head.

"You a Papist!" he said incredulously.

"A rank Papist," affirmed Garry amusedly. "But surely, Trap, I have not fallen in thine estimation now that thou knowest what I am?"

"A Roman Catholic!" gasped Trap in bewildered tones. "But no swordsman like yourself can be a follower of the Pope!"

The Scotsman regarded his friend interestedly.

"Can a man not be a Catholic and a bonnie fighter withal?" he asked.

"Aye," grunted Trap. "Meseems he can." He looked searchingly at the other and in his

gaze was something of affection. "I know one
—one—"

"—accursed Papist," suggested Garry, his eyes twinkling.

"—one Catholic gentleman," continued Trap sternly, "who is a better man than any *Protestant* I know."

He stepped forward and held out a hand which Garry clasped warmly. Henceforward the question of religion never came up between them and, to his dying day, Trap Farthing would never willingly admit that the Papists were all bad.

The gallery ended at the cathedral and there was no visible continuation of it from the crypt. The early builders of the city had no doubt intended the tunnel as a means of saving the sacred vessels of the church in times of invasion and had connected it with the other galleries that underlay the city. But if such had indeed been their design they had either neglected to connect the gallery with the cathedral proper or else, as was most likely the case, the exit was so cleverly hidden that the three adventurers could not find it.

But the flame of their half-consumed torch showed no signs of flicker as Garry held it above his head and, half frantic with thirst, they with one accord decided to seek the passage up which the air current flowed.

Several galleries which opened into the main tunnel were explored, but without result. These galleries had either never been completed or else they had fallen in. In every case they were stopped by a rubble of fallen earth and stones which blocked their further progress and they finally ceased their efforts through sheer inability to move their tired limbs. On a soft heap of rotted wood, over which Puna spread her agouti wrap, they lay down to sleep, and the busy world above their prison rested throughout another night before the excruciating pangs of hunger and thirst—but principally thirst—roused the wanderers to another agonising period of wakefulness.

How long they had been imprisoned within the stone walls and under the ancient edifices of the city Garry had no means of knowing. It seemed ages since that night, æons ago, that Puna had pressed the hidden bar and the solid wall had opened for them. His head was buzzing and his thick tongue and lips were incapable of sound when first he awoke, and the gnawing pain in his stomach almost doubled him up when he essayed to stand.

His first thought was of the dripping walls and slimy roof of the lower portion of their prison, and thither, after lighting a torch, he went. With shaking hands he scooped up the ill-smelling moisture from the walls and drank

greedily of the filth that filled his palms. That the moisture might be, and possibly was, the exudation from a sewer, never troubled him at all. In his eagerness to satisfy that soul-wracking thirst he was past caring from what source the satisfying beverage might have sprung and, when his thirst was assuaged, he made his way back to where his companions awaited him.

Puna and Trap Farthing at his suggestion quenched their maddening thirst at the same source and, although the Indian maiden made a gesture of repugnance as the foul-smelling liquid touched her lips, she drank deeply thereof and was the better for it.

Whether it was day or night, sunset or dawn, in the outside world, none of the three had any idea. Garry was determined to trace the draught that blew through the tunnel to its source, having failed utterly to ascertain the spot where it left the gallery, and with this idea in mind he left his companions where they were while he went on a trip of exploration by himself. Slighter though he was in build than the more robust Farthing, he nevertheless had more vitality and staying power and, though Trap was loath to wander from the comfortable spot where Garry left him, the Scotsman's tired limbs were filled with a fresh energy and he set out on his quest determined to find the exit by which the Arawaks for

generations had sallied forth into the city upon vengeance bent.

Puna, despite the proverbial stamina and endurance of her race, was weak from hunger and the effects of her experiences in the underground mazes, and she elected to remain with the Englishman, a decision to which Trap made no audible objection.

Garry set off up the passage toward the circular stone steps which led to the upper gallery, exploring minutely every opening, natural or artificial, which he found on the way. One of these openings grew larger as he penetrated it and he was delighted to observe as he walked slowly up a slight gradient that the flame of his torch was blowing back behind him, even when he stood still, and that the source of the draught lay somewhere ahead of him. As he had half expected, the gallery finally ended in a square chamber and the man stifled an exclamation of joy as he saw, on the wall opposite the entrance of the gallery, a square patch of light !

Filled with elation, his head throbbing with excitement, Garry walked over to the small, barred window through which the light was coming, but he stopped suddenly just before he reached it as he heard the sound of people talking on the other side of the wall.

Quickly extinguishing the torch and creeping quietly toward the aperture Garry slowly raised

his head and peered over the lower edge of the sill. To his intense disgust and bitter disappointment the window was barred and the wall was so thick that he could only deduce that the room on the other side was illumined by artificial light and that it was occupied by several men, the tones of whose voices he could make out, but whose words he could not distinguish.

Baffled at last he moved away from the opening, determined to return again with Trap, when they would attempt to loosen one of the bars which lay between them and freedom, and endeavour to gain access to the city. He shuffled cautiously along the floor until his feet came in contact with some metal object that clinked dully as he struck it. Kindling a light he glanced down to see what he had stumbled against and as his eyes took in the gruesome object which lay upon the ground he uttered an ejaculation of horror and backed away. A skeleton, chained by one bony leg to a staple let into the rocky floor, grinned up at him, and Garry's fingers were quick to make the sign of the Cross.

When he returned to the spot where the others awaited him, Trap listened with interest to his agitated tale and he evinced great interest in the fact that a possible means of freedom had been discovered.

"Thou'lt come with me," said Garry deter-

minedly as he threw himself down beside his friend. "Not for a king's ransom would I again face that bony thing alone. I'm all of a tremble yet."

"Aye," soliloquised Trap. "'Twill be from hunger. I could set my teeth into a nice, thick, well-cooked piece of meat——"

"'Tis not from hunger—though I'll not say I wouldn't join you in your imaginary feast," retorted Garry. "The sight of that skeleton grinning at me, with its rusted chain dangling from the white bone of its leg, set me to thinking what our own fate might be should we not succeed in escaping from this awful place."

Puna whimpered from hunger and Trap turned solicitously to her. Garry, extinguishing his torch, quickly lighted it again as the clammy darkness enveloped them and, sticking the end of the knot in a convenient crevice in the rock, he set himself to wait until the people who occupied the room beyond the barred window might have had time to vacate it.

In fitful doze he sat for hours, his brain tortured with delirium. It was with an effort that he would, time and time again, drive away the madness that overpowered his hunger-numbed brain. Trap sat with Puna's head in his lap and, when the little Indian maid cried pitifully for food, he groaned in an agony of spirit and cursed fulsomely under his breath.

Garry awoke with a start.

The darkness was intense and the silence oppressive. For a moment a horrible fear assailed him that his companions had died whilst he slept and that he alone was alive in this horrible place of death and mystery. But a sudden stifled sigh reassured him and with groping fingers he felt for and lighted a pine-knot. Under its sudden glare the sleeping Trap stirred slightly and his arm tightened about the shoulder of the little maiden who slept against his breast. Garry smiled sadly as he regarded his two friends, and then, with fresh courage and a determination to brave alone the terrors of the tunnel, he left his sleeping companions and made his way through the labyrinth of passages to the spot where the skeleton awaited him.

The grisly horror lay as he had last seen it and Garry shuddered as he tiptoed past it and walked toward the grated window, which now lay black and empty before him. No light shone behind it and, though Garry listened attentively, he could hear no sound of voices on the farther side of the barrier.

Placing his torch so that its beams shone not on the ghastly bones behind him, he set himself to the task of removing one of the bars by which his progress was impeded. To his surprise and unutterable delight the first bar he tested moved

under his efforts and two strong pulls were sufficient to loosen its lower end from the rotten "mampostería" in which it was embedded. Its mate was likewise easily wrested from its position and, almost before he realised it, a hole large enough for him to crawl through was open before him.

Garry picked up his torch and thrust it ahead of him as he slowly crawled through the embrasure and, by its light, the interior of the chamber was revealed to him. Several heavy articles of furniture appeared scattered about its spacious expanse, but there was no sign of any living thing in the room, and he quickly dropped to his feet and held the torch high as he scanned the place into which he had ventured.

A huge chair, liberally ornamented with spikes and straps, arrested his attention and, for a moment, its purpose escaped him. But the sight of a pillory, quickly followed by glimpses of a small forge, several branding irons and other instruments of torture caused the blood to run cold in his veins as he realised that he was standing in the torture-chamber of the Inquisition of Santo Domingo.

He wasted no time in examining the horrible objects with which the chamber was lavishly furnished. A door in a side wall engaged his attention and with careful fingers he tried the bolt. It opened to the pressure of his hand,

and a long, black passage-way, sloping upwards, lay dark before him. He silently closed the door and crept up the corridor, past a row of empty cells, toward another door whose outlines showed indistinct at the far end of the passage-way. This door was bolted on the inside, and this proof that somewhere within the confines of the building were human beings caused Garry to hurriedly extinguish his torch and to slide back the heavy bolt with infinite caution.

The glorious breath of the open-air caressed his cheek as the door swung open on its hinges and he was not too critical of the smells that assailed his nostrils as he filled his lungs with its freshness. He laid down his extinguished torch and crept quietly along the short alley which extended from the door to the street. A crescent moon gleamed brightly over the trees in a garden and its dim light was illumination enough for the man accustomed to the fitful light of a pine torch. He sighed happily to himself as he walked silently along the deserted street in the shadow of the buildings that lined it, and he glowed with satisfaction at the thought that, though he had not discovered the secret passage of the Arawaks, he had made his way into the city by a route never before undertaken by man. The thought that Joan might be sleeping but a short distance away from where he stood started the blood to coursing through

his veins but, though she was never far absent from his thoughts, other, more pressing matters claimed his attention and he continued his search for food.

A light gleamed in the window of a small house on the river bank and Garry quietly made his way toward it. To his wary gaze was vouchsafed the sight of a man sleeping quietly on the floor beside the embers of a fire, and the hungry Scotsman's nose apprised him of the fact that the fellow had finished his night's baking and that the result of his labours lay spread on a board upon the table beside him.

Garry removed his leathern shoes and climbed silently in through the window, determined to throttle the man should he awake while the marauder was in the room. Fortunately for Ignacio Altagracia, the baker, his labours had been heavy and he was naturally a deep sleeper.

Elated with his success, Garry donned his shoes again and he walked back toward the spot from which he had sallied forth on his excursion. At the nearest corner of the garden in which tall palm-trees reached the sky, he chanced across a well and, to the accompaniment of a chorus of "Ko-kee—ko-kee!" from innumerable tree-toads, he drew a bucket of cooling water and plunged his cracked lips into its welcome depth. Refreshed, he lowered the bucket again and raised it dripping to the sur-

face. With his clasp-knife he severed the rope with which it was attached to an iron ring on the coping of the well and, freighted with food and water, he reached the doorway as the dawn poked delicate fingers under the canopy of night.

He lighted his torch, closed and bolted the door, and was soon climbing laboriously through the barred window which gave into the underground passages. It was the work of a moment to replace the loosened bars so that they appeared solid to the view and, hard pressed to carry his burden of food and his spluttering torch, he bowed gravely to the grinning unfortunate who lay, as he was destined to lie, until his white bones crumbled to dust. Garry was a different man and the ghastly secret of the catacomb had now no terrors for him.

The ravenous manner in which Trap and Puna devoured the fresh bread and drank of the sparkling water was pitiful to behold, but Garry's heart warmed within him at the expressions of gratitude that poured from the Indian maiden's lips when she had eaten to repletion. Trap said no word, but his expression was more eloquent than speech could have been, and Garry felt amply repaid for the dangers he had undergone on his comrades' behalf.

The food he had stolen was just sufficient to last the day and he decided, after consulting Puna and Trap, that they enter the city that

evening and take refuge in the garden near which Garry had found the refreshing well. This garden could appertain only to the palace of the Governor or to some other high official, and it appeared to be the logical spot from which to base their search for the widow of Sir Howard Manvers.

The long day wore slowly on. Garry had no means of determining the time and he waited with impatience until he judged it to be midnight. Throughout the day, Trap and Puna, much refreshed by the food of which they had partaken, though suffering grievously from cramps, dozed in one another's arms and, as Trap's bearded face brushed the trustful upturned countenance of the girl, Garry shook his head in wonderment at the change that had come over the burly Englishman since love had entered his soul, and he felt a wondrously sympathetic feeling for his companion in the emotion that made them kin.

Came the hour when Garry determined that the time was ripe to sally forth. In single file they left the spot whereon they had spent so many miserable hours and, guided by the Scotsman, the little party made its way to the chamber of the skeleton. To their dismay a light glowed through the barred opening and Garry speedily extinguished the torch which he carried and silently crept over to the opening.

With a minimum of noise he again loosened the bars from their sockets and crawled through the aperture until he could glimpse the whole of the room below him. Accustomed as he was to horrors his face grew pale and his lips twitched uncontrollably as his eyes took in the ghastly scene which was illumined by the light of a flickering torch.

Strapped to the chair whose size had attracted his attention on his first visit was the figure of a man, whose naked body was so mutilated as to almost defy recognition. So terrible were his disfigurements that Garry had some difficulty in recognising one of the seamen of the *Happy Adventure* who had accepted the promised sanctuary of *El Gran Grifon*.

Confronting the unhappy wretch and seated in a chair the better to view his sufferings was another man, apparently a guard left to prolong the agony of this victim of the implacable Governor. He sat in silence, his back turned toward the window from which the avenging Garry Graeme was slowly descending. The subdued moaning of the tortured man prevented the other from hearing the slight noise that Garry made and when the heavy, unlighted pine-knot descended with terrific force upon his head, he sank limply to the floor and expired without a struggle.

There was nothing that Garry could do to

lessen the sufferings of the unconscious wretch whose bonds he quickly loosened, and the tenuous thread of his life snapped as his would-be rescuer laid the poor battered body upon the stone floor. As Trap Farthing clumsily dropped to the floor and the horrified eyes of the Arawak maiden appeared in the embrasure, Garry hastily divested the guard of his heavy cloak and laid it over the body of the Englishman. Then, placing his fingers before his lips, he walked over to the door and gently opened it.

As before, the sloping corridor was empty, and Garry bade his companions await him while he went ahead to see that the coast was clear. He drew back the bolt by which the heavy door was barred and let himself out into the alley which led on to the street and, as he stood before the closed door, he listened alarmedly to the sound of men shouting. As he waited in puzzled indecision, a small figure roughly collided with him and he clung to it as he endeavoured to regain his balance. A man with torch held high suddenly burst into view, and behind him another, and another. In the glare of the flaming torches the face of the person who had so rudely disturbed him showed distinct and his arms clutched her tighter as he recognised those beloved features.

It was Joan Manvers!

GARRY held the fainting girl to him while the nonplussed guards surrounded them. One of the baffled soldiers scratched his head and hesitantly addressed the Scotsman.

"May I ask, señor," he said, "who you are, and what you are doing here at this hour of the night?"

The young man looked up from the white face of the girl.

"I am this lady's friend," he replied. "If ye will disperse I will take her to her quarters. She requires medical attention—and I am a physician."

The man addressed looked nervously about him and he sought counsel of one of his companions. The two guards whispered earnestly together. Garry backed quietly away from the group, it being his intention to gain the protection of the portal which lay unbolted behind him; but his action was observed, and two of the soldiers placed themselves between him and the door.

"You may be the lady's friend," observed the guard who had spoken to him before, "but you will have to prove your right to be abroad at this hour to His Excellency, the Governor."

He eyed the young Scotsman suspiciously and lowered the blade of his sword so that the point was directed at the other's heart.

“I will go with ye,” assented Garry in non-chalant voice, though inwardly he cursed the cruel fortune which had contrived to dash so soon his cup of joy from his lips. “Do ye lead and I will follow after.”

He looked down into Joan’s face and a world of affection was in his glance. The girl’s blue eyes were fixed in a wondering stare upon her lover’s face.

“Garry, mine own!” she half sobbed, and she threw her arms about his neck in sudden abandon. “I thought thee dead and I longed to join thee!”

“My beloved!” whispered the man, and he tenderly kissed the girl’s pale brow. “Tell me, sweet, has aught of evil befallen thee since the Spaniard carried thee off . . . and why art thou garbed in a nun’s habit?”

Joan shook her head and clutched him tighter; but he who appeared to be in authority over the soldiers of the guard listened with ever-growing suspicion to the sound of the hated English tongue and he roughly seized the girl by the arm.

Garry cried out in sudden passion as he felt Joan’s arm slip away from his shoulder, but before he could spring upon the soldier he felt himself seized by several muscular arms and he was powerless in their grasp.

“You are English!” declared the sergeant accusingly. “You will accompany this lady

and stand trial before his excellency. Vamonos —hombres ! ”

The little procession made its way along the darkened street toward the garden entrance and up the long path toward the garden gate. Sick with mortification that he should so easily have been captured by the Spaniards after all the perils he had undergone, and yet strangely happy for the companionship of the girl he loved, Garry glanced behind him as they started up the street and he noted with relief that Trap and Puna were as yet unconscious of the disaster that had befallen him.

Peñalva had been roused by the sound of musket-fire and he stood staring down at the body of the unhappy Agatha, which had been flung upon the ground outside the door and over which two soldiers bent with torches. At sound of the returning guard the Governor turned and peered eagerly at the group, and his face, when he saw Joan safe in the hands of her captors, wore a relieved but angry expression.

“ Foolish child ! ” he admonished as the soldiers stopped with their prisoners. “ These clumsy oafs might very well have wounded thee with their senseless shooting ! But whom have we here ? ” he queried as the light from the torches illumined Garry’s unkempt face, over which his straggled looks were streaming.

“ He claims to be a physician, and this lady’s

friend, Your Excellency," said the sergeant, straightening up as the Governor addressed him.

Peñalva regarded Garry through lowered eyelids and Garry returned the inspection with defiant gaze. Finally the Governor withdrew his scornful survey of the young man and he spoke to Joan.

"Truly thou hast displayed little taste in thy choice of friends. What art thou to this vagabond that he dares speak to thee as his equal?"

Garry's broad shoulders straightened and he answered for the girl, to whom this talk in an alien tongue was all gibberish.

"I am no vagabond, señor," he retorted, and Peñalva's eyes raised at the apparent breeding of the man as displayed in his cultured tones. "Furthermore, I am, as you have been informed, a friend of Lady Joan Manvers, and I stand ready to prove my right to that privilege by protecting her against the insults of any who dare presume on slight acquaintance with her." The Governor's use of "thee" and "thou" when he addressed the girl rankled in Garry's breast and he stared balefully at him, his nostrils quivering.

Peñalva's jaw dropped with astonishment at this unexpected outburst and his glance alternated in an uncertain manner between the man and the woman.

"By the Virgin!" he managed to gasp at last, and the slow colour mounted to his temples

"You have a bold tongue, señor ! I also am a friend of this lady's, and one whose ability to protect her is, I fancy, greater even than yours !"

Garry's eyes never wavered as Peñalva angrily regarded him and, before the captive's steely gaze that of the Governor fell. Peñalva felt a sudden dislike and jealousy of this man who appeared to be so unafraid of his power.

"You are no Spaniard—though you speak like one," he said. "And I cannot place your features."

"My name is Garry Graeme, señor," was the steady reply. "I am indeed no Spaniard ; Scotland is my home."

"A heretic !" snapped Peñalva triumphantly. "Our saintly archbishop looks with disfavour upon the old-fashioned methods of converting heretics to the faith ; but the good friar is away from the city and I will personally attend to your conversion. . . . But how did you manage to enter this city without alarming the guards ?"

Garry smiled scornfully. No human power would force him to divulge the secret of the Arawaks, nor would he be the instrument through which Trap and Puna should be captured by the Spaniards.

"I had little difficulty in slipping past your sentries unseen," he glibly returned. "Had this gracious lady not swooned at a most inopportune time I should now have had her safely beyond your power."

Peñalva's eyes blazed with jealousy and his jaws clenched.

"Furthermore," continued Garry, "I am no heretic. I am as staunch a Catholic as are you, señor."

The Governor eyed the other incredulously for a moment, and he shrugged his shoulders dubiously.

"That remains to be seen," he muttered. Then, conscious of the gaping mouths of the interested soldiers, he ordered the two captives taken to his quarters, and he walked behind the little group as the guards obeyed his command.

"Now, señor," said Peñalva as he seated himself in a chair behind a table in his office. "I wish to know how you arrived on this island, and where you became acquainted with Lady Manvers."

Garry stood before him, an armed guard with drawn sword behind his back. In another chair, facing Peñalva, sat Joan, her face worn with fatigue and suffering, albeit the glow in her eyes whenever she glanced at her lover was not lost upon the jealous Spaniard.

"The vessel upon which Lady Manvers and I were passengers was sunk by one of your countrymen," answered Garry. "I managed to swim ashore—and here I am. I have known Lady Manvers since she was a child."

Peñalva frowned.

"You then are the person for whom she craved mercy should you be taken by my men," he said. "What has befallen the lady's husband?"

"Alas, he is dead," was Garry's reply, though his eyes glowed happily at this certain sign of Joan's love for him.

"Then she is a widow," mused Peñalva, and a sudden evil expression flitted across his face. "I can now make her my wife."

He toyed with a small knife as he said these words, and there was silence for a space. When he looked up again Peñalva gloated inwardly at sight of Garry's strained and ashen face.

"Your—your wife!" gasped the Scotsman, looking from the Governor to the alarmed and worried face of the girl. "Are you going to marry this man?" he asked her in English.

"No! No!" was her reply, and she stifled a sob with her clenched fist. "He wished to make me his mistress and I—I ran away!"

Peñalva rapped fiercely upon the table.

"Have done!" he commanded Garry. "I cannot speak your barbarous tongue, but I can guess what passed between you. The young lady does not have to be consulted as to her desires in the matter—at the present moment. I believe I can induce her to consent of her own free-will to become my wife."

Garry controlled himself with an effort and he took a half step forward. The sharp point

of a sword suddenly pricked him in the back and he drew himself erect.

“You cannot marry Joan Manvers!” he vehemently cried. “She is mine! You cannot marry a Scotswoman!”

Peñalva regarded the other coolly.

“My friend,” he said, “it is not my intention to make Lady Manvers the Countess of Peñalva; nor is it my intention to have the marriage ceremony solemnised by the Church. All I require is the lady’s consent to live with me as head of my household in Baní—and that will not be difficult of obtainment.”

“Your conscience——!”

“I have none,” smiled the Governor. “Lady Manvers can congratulate herself that I have personally taken an interest in her. As my—er—wife, her position in the world will be higher than if she had married a Scottish nobody.”

“She will never consent to your infamous proposal,” muttered Garry; but his heart sank as he realised the girl’s weakness and his utter inability to be of assistance to her. As the Governor’s leering face danced before his eyes, the sudden impulse to throw himself upon the man and throttle him almost overpowered him, but Joan read the madness in his face and she cried out to him, bidding him be calm.

“Restrain thine anger, Garry!” she coun-

elled. "Let us bide our time. Surely a just God will not see us separated!"

"She is a comely wench and full of spirit," mocked Peñalva, endeavouring to goad the Scotsman into committing some overt act. "We will have many pleasant chats about you, Señor Graeme, when the young lady is gracing my establishment at Baní."

Garry clenched his fists until the knuckles showed white, but he curbed his desire to murder the wretch who smilingly taunted him, and his blazing eyes never for a moment left the Governor's face.

"The man is very daring," resumed Peñalva, "who has the effrontery to look upon any woman whom I have honoured with my attentions. I sadly fear, señor, that you are shortly going to have a most unpleasant time."

Garry made no reply to this ominous remark, and the Governor, after a moment's silence, ordered him to be taken to a cell in the lower part of the building. Joan he personally escorted to her room and, after satisfying himself that the girl could not escape by the window, he bolted her door from the outside and retired again to his quarters.

Peñalva was determined to take Joan from the Capital without delay and he secretly intended consigning Garry to the lowest cells of the Homenage where, imprisoned by walls

that no human power could batter down, he might soon waste away. He would have welcomed a pretext for executing the Scotsman, but there was no plausible reason for so doing without standing eternally damned in the eyes of Joan Manvers. By appearing to exercise clemency toward the girl's lover he might ingratiate himself into her affections and she be none the wiser as to Garry's ultimate fate. Thus reasoned the Governor and, in his warped mind, he imagined that there was no flaw in his deductions.

But the discovery next morning of the murder of the Governor's executioner by the stranger, circumstantial evidence of whose crime was borne out by his capture at the door of the building, was welcomed by Peñalva as an excellent excuse for doing away with the man. The Governor had no suspicion as yet that Garry had entered the city through the Galleries of Colón, and it was with no misgivings as to the safety of his captive that he ordered Garry's incarceration in one of the cells fronting on the sloping corridor that led down to the execution chamber in the House of the Inquisition. These cells were for the use of prisoners awaiting trial. The condemned cells were dungeons situated directly under these upper cells and the plight of the wretch imprisoned therein was miserable indeed.

Peñalva was jealous of Joan's love for Garry and though that emotion in its deeper significance was foreign to the nature of the Spaniard he could not tolerate the thought of another man sharing the affections of the woman he desired. That he had an irresistible attraction for every member of the opposite sex, despite their outward seeming, was one of the beliefs that was most firmly ingrained in the complacent opinion of the Governor. Joan had shown no signs as yet of falling under the spell of his attractions and for that reason the ultimate conquest of the girl was rendered more joyous in the anticipation.

But Peñalva's plans were rudely shattered on the morning following Garry's commitment to the cells. He had arranged that day to forget for a week the cares of state and had already committed the affairs of the island to the capable hands of the archbishop, Maldonado, who had returned that morning from a visit to an outlying parish. Furthermore, floating at anchor at the mouth of the Ozama was the small vessel upon which he contemplated sailing to Baní and, in her quarters in the palace, Joan was sitting by her window, awaiting with leaden heart the summons to leave this place, within whose environs her lover lay imprisoned.

The sails aboard the *Santa Teresa* were idly rising into place, and the care-free sailors were

lustily singing a chantey of the sea when, from behind Point Nigua, four leagues to the west of the city, a distant sail appeared, followed by another, and another, until the whole sea in that quarter seemed covered with vessels.

From all parts of the city the townspeople flocked to the sea walls to gaze upon the awe-inspiring sight and to speculate as to the nationality of the strange fleet. Peñalva, closeted with the archbishop and other officials, abandoned his viceregal duties for the moment and in company with the excited officers of his staff, he ascended the Tower of Homage—the old Homenage—and calmly surveyed the approaching vessels.

“What make you of those ships, Baez?” he asked of an old sea captain who squinted under his hand at the fleet.

“They be not Spanish, Your Excellency,” was the reply, and the mariner gazed searchingly at the fleet. “By the clumsy lines of their hulls they be the English ships we’re expecting.”

Peñalva, although he half expected such an answer, whistled his dismay, and some, within hearing of Baez’s voice, shouted “The English! The English!” Whereupon the cry was echoed and re-echoed throughout the city and a panic ensued amongst the townspeople as they hastily scurried from the walls in case the approaching vessels should bombard the city.

The half-hoisted sails aboard the *Santa Teresa* came down with a rush, and a boatload of sailors left the ship and slowly pulled her up the river under the protection of the guns of the *Homenage*. Joan, as the hours dragged on, quite unaware of what was occurring, sank into a dull apathy and she dispiritedly wondered what might be keeping the man who had sworn to make her love him.

But Peñalva was concerned with weightier matters. The identity of the ships had been now thoroughly established, and it did not need the alarming sound of gun-fire as the leading vessels of the fleet fired upon the fortress of San Geronimo, a league distant from the city, to prove that this was the long-expected squadron of the English Admiral, William Penn. At the first sound of the cannonade Joan raised her head in wonder, and Garry, sitting, head buried in his hands upon the floor of the cell, felt a thrill of hope course through his veins; but when his gaoler that night told him that the English had been repulsed, he sank into a hopeless apathy of despair.

The English did not attack the city that day, nor for many days thereafter. The fleet came to anchor at the mouth of the Jaina, ten miles to the west of the city and, save for several minor affrays with small scouting parties of the English, the Spaniards were not molested by the

main body of their troops, which lay inactive in camp for the space of ten days.

Throughout this period Peñalva paid no attention to his captives. The ever-present threat of attack by the rapidly acclimatising forces of the English necessitated his presence with his soldiers through every hour of the day and night. On the tenth day after the landing of the English an attack in force was made by Colonel Buller, which was broken up before the dispirited English troops reached the city walls. The invaders were caught in the flank by the garrison at Fort San Geronimo and, after vainly battering at the city walls with a number of small cannon, they retired precipitately upon the main body of troops under Venables at Navayo.

Garry clung eagerly to the door of his cell as the sullen boom of guns crept closer and closer and when the first grenade burst within the city, rocking the stone walls of his prison to their foundations, he raised his eyes to heaven and mumbled a prayer that the English might be successful in their attack.

But the day wore on and darkness fell, and with the descent of night the cannonade ceased and the English desisted in their attempts to take the city. It did not need the wild, exultant cries of the defenders to tell the lonely listener in his cell that the Spaniards had successfully withstood the attack; and Joan, in the privacy of

her room, sobbed quietly as the hope of deliverance from Peñalva's power received its quietus.

Garry lay that night wide awake, thinking on the events of the past few weeks. At intervals the distant, subdued sounds of merry-making reached his ears as parties of drunken soldiers, elated with their success of the day, joined the excited townspeople and made night hideous as they paraded the streets. He mentally blessed the strong bars that lay between him and the shouting Spaniards, and he thanked his lucky stars that he was safe, from their ravening grasp——

“Puna !”

Garry started as the hoarse whisper broke in upon his thoughts and he sat upright upon his musty bed and stared toward the spot where lay the unseen door of his cell.

“Abide in this spot till I return, Puna. I'll not be long.”

At sound of Trap's voice Garry darted toward the door, the sound of his shuffling footsteps being followed by a stifled gasp of dismay from the corridor outside. From the end of the passage a door opened and noiselessly closed.

“Where art thou, Puna ?” said Garry softly as his eyes in vain endeavoured to pierce the blackness of the corridor.

“Is it you, Don Garry ?” floated back the answer in frightened tones, and Garry sensed,

rather than saw, that the Indian maiden's slight figure was pressed against the door of his prison.

"Where has Trap gone?" he demanded as he felt through the iron grating and affectionately clasped the girl by one of her groping hands.

"Ah, señor," replied Puna. "He has gone in search of you and I fear for his safety. I tried to dissuade him, but he was obdurate. I knew that you were better fitted to take care of yourself among these people," she added apologetically. "But I must tell him you are here."

Her little feet padded softly up the corridor and the door opened again. Within the minute she was back.

"I could not see him, señor," she said. "He had disappeared, and a band of people was coming up the street and so I fled."

"God grant he return scatheless!" murmured Garry uneasily. "But, tell me, how have ye managed since the Spaniards captured me? Have ye managed to get food and drink?"

"We would have starved but that Terrap caught a dog and two cats which we cooked and ate, and we have managed to subsist on them. Terrap also discovered the secret of the entrance stone, and we go abroad outside the city of nights."

Garry gasped.

"Ye have been forced to eat dog!" he whispered in horrified accents. A loud sound of shouting and drunken singing sounded in

the street outside, and when it subsided Garry softly called the name of the girl. There was no response, and he feared that she had sought refuge again in the underground passages, and he was much relieved to hear the heavy sound of her breathing a few moments later.

"I tremble for my Terrap!" she whispered, half sobbing. "I would have gone with him, but he said me nay. Would that we had known you were here!"

"I have been here—a long time," said Garry, uncertain as to the number of days he had occupied the cell. "I have not heard either of ye pass this door."

"We dared not pass through that—that room," replied Puna. "After you went away and did not come back we waited there until people began to move about in this corridor. That same day Terrap discovered the bar that unloosed the stone at the entrance to the galleries, and to-day we watched the fighting through the half-opened stone, and were sorrowful when your countrymen were driven away by the Spaniards."

"Ye saw the fighting!" whispered Garry hoarsely. Then a sudden idea struck him and, reaching between the bars, he seized the girl by the shoulder.

"Hearken, Puna!" he said in an excited whisper. "Dost think thou couldst reach the

English forces and guide a party of soldiers into the city through the passage of the Arawaks? A small body of soldiers could overpower the palace guards and release Lady Manvers before retaliation could be attempted."

"We had thought of that," was Puna's apathetic reply. "But the Spaniards lay between us and the English, and I knew that my Terrap could never slip through their lines unobserved."

"But thou couldst do it!"

"I do not wish to leave this place without Terrap."

Garry sighed impatiently.

"I will tell Trap Farthing where thou hast gone," he replied hurriedly. "He must needs pass this cell when he returns. But get thee gone! Some person approaches!"

Someone rattled at the door and Garry heard him give an ejaculation of surprise at finding it unbolted. The door was closed again and the gaoler, who had partaken in the festivities of the evening, lighted a torch and peered suspiciously in upon the apparently sleeping figure of the Scotsman. With a grunt of relief at finding his prisoner safely under lock and key the man bolted fast the door through which Trap had gained entry to the city and with one last look into the cell, he disappeared through the door that led into the Place of Execution and retired to his own quarters.

Garry saw no more of Puna that night, but next afternoon Peñalva paid him a visit and he knew, from the tenor of the Governor's opening remarks, that Trap Farthing had fallen into the hands of his men.

"Are you conversant with the Galleries of Colón—the channel by which the barbarous natives of this island gain access to the city?" he brusquely demanded.

Garry leaned against the bars of his cell door and calmly surveyed the Governor, who was comfortably seated upon a cushioned chair in the torch-lighted corridor. With well-simulated concern he answered the man, but his heart grew leaden as he realised what this questioning meant.

"Do they not enter by the city gates?" he nonchalantly replied.

Peñalva's brows darkened.

"You know well that the Arawaks have knowledge of a passage—the secret galleries of Diego Colón—by which they enter this city unobserved," he said angrily. "Furthermore, I have proof that you thrust your unwelcome presence upon us by the same path. I demand that you tell me the truth."

Garry regarded his visitor calmly.

"What proof have you?"

"An Englishman was captured by my vigilant soldiers last night," replied the Governor. "He

was dumb to all my questions as to how he managed to gain ingress to this place—though I found means to loosen his tongue in a measure.”

Garry swallowed nervously.

“Did you—— Is he living?” he asked.

The Spaniard regarded his prisoner with cynical eye.

“He is—yet,” he replied. “He was offered his life for the information I wished, but he refused to answer. He dies to-night.”

“And if I tell you what I know——?”

“If you will give me this information I will pardon you for the murder of the soldier, Iglesias.”

“You have no proof that I killed him!”

Peñalva’s jaws set firmly.

“Enough of this palaver!” he rejoined.

“Are you going to tell me the location of the secret entrance?”

“Will you spare the life of the Englishman if I tell you?”

Peñalva scowled, but he sullenly nodded his head.

“Will you guarantee to set us both at liberty?”

The other made an affirmative gesture.

“And will you——” Garry regarded the other closely “—will you permit Lady Manvers to accompany me?”

Peñalva swore an angry oath.

"Your impertinence is colossal!" he stormed. "Have done with your questioning! Will you, or will you not, give me the information I have asked of you?"

"If Joan Manvers is given her freedom and allowed to accompany me to where the English be encamped," was the decisive answer.

The Governor's face purpled with rage and he rose from his chair and walked angrily over toward the other. Garry calmly scrutinised the furious man, his arms folded across his chest, albeit his beating heart belied the composure of his features.

For an instant the two men stood face to face, the iron bars of the cell door between them. Suddenly a look of cunning overspread Peñalva's features and he shrugged his shoulders.

"If you insist," he said airily, "I suppose I must grant you your request. Come, then, tell me how you managed to gain access to this place."

"First grant me my freedom," answered Garry, "and that of Lady Manvers and Trap Farthing. Then, when we have been escorted beyond the city walls, I will tell you——" He stopped as he thought of Puna, somewhere within the dreadful galleries alone. "No, I cannot," he declared suddenly. "You must give me three days in which to think over the matter."

Peñalva turned and, walking determinedly toward the door leading to the street, he called

his escort of soldiers to him. The door was unlocked and two of the guards seized Garry by the shoulders and forcibly escorted him up the hall and into the street, toward the entrance to the condemned cells which lay below the Place of Execution.

"You have had the opportunity to save your skin," he heard the Governor say. "It does not suit my pleasure to wait three days for the information I desire. We will force it from your lips to-night! You will learn how very persuasive the rack and thumbscrew can be!"

XII

The Governor's Vengeance

TRAP'S white features, illumined by the light of the gaoler's torch, stared up at Garry as he was thrust into the noisome dungeon in which he was to be allowed to spend the last hours of his life, and Trap's voice, raised in a cry of welcome, apprised him of the fact that his companion still lived.

"What of Puna, master?" was Farthing's eager question after the cell door had been locked and the gaolers had retired. Garry told him of his meeting with the maiden and of her retreat to the subterranean passages after he, Trap, had left her in the corridor, and Trap sighed his relief that the little savage had escaped capture.

In reply to the other's questioning Trap told him of how he had slipped into the street and had crossed into the palace gardens unobserved ; of how he had prowled about the ancient edifice, seeking in vain some clue as to his master's whereabouts and how, after a fruitless all night search, he had returned to the House of the Inquisition and had found the door bolted against him.

The story of his capture by an armed body of soldiers and of his subsequent incarceration and examination by the Governor was listened to with intense interest by Garry and, when the Englishman told his friend of the means that had been taken to loosen his tongue, Garry exclaimed in mingled sympathy and indignation, and he observed for the first time that Trap's recital was punctuated by muffled grunts of anguish.

"It is my arms," explained the ex-pirate. "The Dons nigh broke them, so much did they twist them as they vainly tried to extort a confession from me as to how I had entered their accursed city. I cannot yet bear to raise them to shoulder-height."

In the intense darkness of their prison Garry could do nought to alleviate the suffering of his companion, but he managed to ascertain, after a painful examination of the other's arms, that no bones were broken and that the strained

and twisted ligaments and tendons were the source of Trap's sufferings.

The hours dragged their slow length through the night. Trap slumbered fitfully, dropping off to sleep through sheer weariness and exhaustion, only to suddenly awake as some incautious movement on his part sent excruciating pains throughout his body. Garry could not sleep. In his mind was ever the picture of Joan Manvers clasped in the sensual embrace of the Count of Peñalva, and he groaned in an agony of spirit and impotently raised anguished arms to heaven.

Came daybreak, though the two captives in their prison knew it not. To the listening ears of the English troops, encamped several miles away, floated the silvery tones of "La Diana" as the drums and cornets of the Spanish soldiery saluted the dawn.

A light gleamed in the passage leading to the dungeon and two men appeared outside the cell. The gaoler unlocked the door and quickly closed it again as the person who accompanied him entered the cell. Trap and Garry stared apprehensively at the black-gowned figure which was outlined against the lighted oblong of the door, and then, as his eyes accustomed themselves to the murky light of the torch, Garry sprang to his feet and respectfully saluted the aged priest who stood before him, his breviary clasped in his folded hands.

"Good morrow, Father," whispered Garry in Spanish and, as he sensed the pitiful mission upon which the priest was come, he kneeled before him and bowed his head.

"Peace be with thee, my son," responded the holy man as he bent over the suppliant in an attitude of benediction. Then, while Trap looked wonderingly on, the ecclesiastic listened to the whispered confession of the Scotsman and, in kindly sympathy, administered Extreme Unction, the sacred rites of the Catholic Church to one about to die.

The kneeling guard, in the passage outside, held high the lighted torch, and Trap, gazing upon the unwonted scene with dimming eyes, crawled slowly and painfully to the side of his master. Protestant and Catholic, the condemned men kneeled before the white-haired priest, who blessed them both impartially, and in reverent entreaty consigned their souls to the merciful dispensation of their Creator.

The confessor stepped to one side as the cell door opened and three soldiers entered, the leader of whom beckoned to the kneeling men. Garry assisted his companion to rise and, followed by the sorrowful gaze of the priest, to whom Peñalva had been careful to explain that these men were to suffer execution for barbarous murder, the doomed men walked behind their guards, down through the sloping corridor and

into the place of execution. As they passed for a moment beneath the blue sky of morning, Garry gazed longingly toward the white wall of the House of the Admiral and a sob escaped him. But his shoulders were squared as he entered the brilliantly-lighted chamber where several soldiers busied themselves about the instruments of torment.

Trap's arms were strapped behind him and, though the agony of this procedure was almost unbearable, no sound but a faint groan escaped his lips. He was taken to a rough bench and chained securely to it, for his turn to die was not come yet, and it was determined that the sight of the other's sufferings would break down the barrier of his reserve and the secret of the tunnels forced more easily from his lips. Garry was led to a large square frame, from the upper and lower sides of which chains were hanging. Attached to these chains were wicked-looking iron manacles and Garry's face blanched as he realised that the torture of the rack was his fate.

His ankles and wrists were quickly encircled by the cruel fetters, and four men slowly started winding the windlasses, thereby tightening the chains and spreading his sagging body in a cruciform position. The sharp iron of the manacles bit into the tender flesh as the weight of his body was thrown upon them and Trap cried out in sudden commiseration as he

observed the pain which overspread the features of his master.

The door leading to the street opened again and Peñalva entered, followed by the limp figure of Joan Manvers who was half-dragged, half-carried into this place of horror. Her ashen face was frozen in dismay as the sight of her lover burst full upon her and she groaned in terror though he manfully endeavoured to smile upon her.

Peñalva, laughing, escorted Joan to a chair, into which she limply collapsed, burying her face in her hands to shut out the sight of her lover's torments. He left her there and then walked over to where the body of his enemy swung suspended. The soldiers had momentarily ceased their operations with the windlasses.

"It distresses me to see yon delicate blossom suffer through your obstinacy," he said to the staring Graeme. "Just a few words on your part would save both you and her needless suffering."

Garry looked the Spaniard scornfully in the eye, although the agonised sweat was starting to his forehead.

"Will you give me the information I asked of you?" continued the Governor; "or shall I order these fellows to continue their efforts with the windlasses?"

Garry glanced tenderly toward the little huddled figure in the chair.

"May I discuss the matter with Lady Manvers?" he asked of Peñalva.

The Governor considered this question and he looked dubiously toward Joan and back to his prisoner.

"You will understand, Señor Graeme," he said, after a brief pause, "that, whether you divulge the secret or no, you die—for the murder of one of my soldiers. If, however, you agree to tell me what I desire to hear, Lady Manvers will be spared the agony of watching your execution; furthermore, your death will be speedy and unattended by torture. Do you agree to these conditions?"

Garry moistened his dry lips.

"I am helpless," he replied. "Only grant me the boon of a few moments speech with my lady. I'll soon tell you how I prefer to die."

Peñalva nodded to the soldiers and they immediately loosened the chains by which he hung suspended and Garry stood trembling upon his feet.

"Joan," he gently called, and there was a world of endearment in his voice.

The girl glanced fearfully up and joy overspread her countenance as she beheld her lover's chained arms held out to her. With a cry she rose to her feet and staggered weakly across the stone floor of the chamber to where the man

awaited her. His aching arms enfolded her and lips met lips in hungry caress.

"Oh, Garry," she whispered tremulously. "Has he—has that man pardoned thee?"

Garry choked and hot tears rolled down his cheeks.

"This is farewell, my sweet," he answered. "Be brave, mine own, when I tell thee that I must die."

"Garry, Garry, God will not let thee go!" sobbed Joan, clinging desperately to him. "If they kill thee I will follow—will follow——!"

She could utter no more for a moment and, while Peñalva bit his lip with jealousy, they clung together in ardent embrace.

"He wishes me to divulge the secret of my entry into this place," he whispered to her. "In any case I die—but if I betray the person who made it possible for me to hold thee thus in mine arms, my death will be more merciful, and thou wilt be spared the pain of seeing my torments."

Joan said nothing to this but her convulsive embrace tightened.

"I have been shrived and houseled," continued the man softly, "and would go to my Maker more content if thou wouldst promise me one thing."

Joan's tear-streaked face looked up into his in questioning.

“That thou embrace again the faith of thy fathers—that in which thou wast baptised.”

Joan dumbly nodded her head.

“I promise,” she whispered.

Garry held her tightly and he kissed her white brow.

“Then indeed will we meet in Heaven. Thou wilt be brave as they rack my body?” he murmured questioninglly.

She shuddered, and then she looked up into his face and smiled upon him with wondrous tenderness.

“Thou art indeed a man, my beloved,” she whispered. “Thou’lt not betray the friend who brought thee to me?”

Garry’s smile was untroubled as he answered her.

“I’ll meet my death, God helping me, as befits a son of Scotland—my Scotland!” he whispered in a sudden wave of homesickness for the wild land of his birth.

Peñalva’s hand roughly clutched the maiden’s shoulder and she frantically clung to her lover for one last kiss.

“Have done!” he snarled. “Ye have had time and enough to make up your minds!”

He flung the girl into the arms of one of his soldiers, who gently led her to the chair. “Which is it to be?” he demanded of his helpless victim. “Death by the rack or the rope?”

Garry did not deign to answer him. Turning his head he motioned to the soldiers to commence his torture, and he smiled manfully toward the Governor as he asked that a crucifix be pressed to his lips.

"Ave Maria!" grunted Peñalva in reluctant admiration as he stepped toward the other. "You are no coward, my friend."

The chains tightened and Garry strained his face away from the upheld cross of Peñalva's sword-hilt with agony written upon his features. The beaded sweat rolled down from his brow, but his lips uttered no plaint. In her chair the limp figure of Joan Manvers lay collapsed, and Trap stared toward his master, his white face set in horrified fascination, fearful oaths rolling from his lips.

Had any person among that fascinated audience been watching the trussed ex-pirate they would have noticed that his gaze was suddenly riveted upon another object than the man in the rack, and that his eyes grew wide and wider. His gaze darted toward the Governor and the staring soldiers who were vastly interested in the torments through which Garry was passing. Suddenly, as one of the soldiers, sickening of the duty which had been thrust upon him by the Governor, started to turn his face away from the hideous spectacle, Trap yelled loudly, shout upon shout, and the atten-

tion of the occupants of the chamber was distracted for a moment. This was all the Englishman wanted, for, unheard in the noise he was making, and dropping lightly to their feet from the window behind the Spaniards' backs, a throng of English sailors, headed by the Indian maid, Puna, entered the room !

"Ha, Dick Broadbelt ! John Titmuss ! Billy Prentiss ! Have at 'em, my lads !" yelled Trap exultantly, and the startled Spaniards had barely time to realise that Nemesis had descended swiftly upon them when the English sailors were hacking and cutting at the demoralised and panic-stricken men.

The windlasses rattled noisily as the soldiers who manned them made a dash for the door. The startled Governor was caught in the rush and propelled, willy-nilly, into the safety of the corridor. Garry collapsed unconscious to the ground as the chains relaxed and those dazed Spaniards who endeavoured to stay the rush of the avenging sailors were killed to a man, as the rough throng dashed, whooping, after the retreating Governor and the surviving guards.

Trap's chains were quickly loosed by a bearded seaman and Garry was released from his manacles and placed upon his back, a sailor's rough jacket rolled up and placed beneath his head. Thus he was when, a few minutes after the entry of

his rescuers, he gazed in bewilderment into the beautified face of Joan Manvers.

"Garry, Garry!" she was saying, and the happy tears streamed down her face. "Mine own—my man! Awaken, dearest—the English have come!"

"Ay, master," supplemented the grinning Trap as he stood with an arm about Puna's slender shoulders, unmindful of the sharp twinges of pain that this action evoked. "The seamen from the *Swiftsure*, Captain Jonas Paul's ship, have come to our rescue, and Puna—Puna is safe!"

Garry struggled uncertainly to his feet, his limbs aching in every joint as the fresh blood swelled the strained veins and arteries, and he smiled as he looked down into the glowing eyes of Joan Manvers—but he spoke no word, through very happiness.

In the corridor brisk fighting was in progress and all but two of the English sailors joined their enthusiastic companions as they drove the Spaniards into the street. One of these stood guard over the rescued men and the other was busily engaged upon the pleasurable task of demolishing the wooden racks and frames which filled the chamber, and he wielded his axe with great gusto.

The two men and their happy sweethearts stood a little apart from their companion and

looked interestedly on as the sweating sailor piled the torn mass of wood in the farthest corner of the heavily-timbered room. Trap, though his fingers itched to bear a sword in the merry fight that was being waged in the street, sighed ecstatically as Puna smiled up into his face, and his bearded countenance shone with happiness.

A sailor ran into the chamber from the street and he shouted to the expectant people who waited there that it was time to be going. A fire was kindled under the pile of wrecked furniture and the little group of persons walked up the corridor, along which the crumpled figures of three Spaniards were strewn, and out into the street in which the score or more of English sailors stood at ease. Of the Spaniards not a sign was to be seen save the dead bodies of the three or four men who had incautiously investigated the sudden disturbance in the heart of the city. Peñalva had made good his escape and was, at that moment, hastily assembling a force of men in the palace grounds to repel the daring invaders who had so rudely overthrown his plans.

As the people they had rescued staggered weakly to the street the exultant sailors cheered vociferously and they formed a protecting cordon about them as they prepared to fight their way out of the city, and willing hands

supported the staggering footsteps of the crippled men in whose dazed faces a look of wondering happiness was apparent. The priest, who had been captured as he knelt in prayer without the execution chamber, was gently, but firmly, escorted by two sailors, and the little band started up the street toward the nearest gate in the city wall, that named after the Governor : "La Puerta del Conde" (The Gate of the Count).

In the belfry which overhung the quarters of the guard at the gate the small bell was clanging noisily and atop its battlemented walls the frightened Spaniards scurried in panic. Several shots rang out and puffs of smoke rose in the early morning air as the soldiers there stationed loosed their pieces in the direction of the advancing sailors but, as the shouting Englishmen dashed toward their refuge, the Spaniards abandoned everything and fled for protection along the wall to the nearest bastion.

It was the matter of a moment to unbar the gate and to draw its heavy wings back, and the victorious Englishmen were through the wall and running along the San Geronimo road before the stunned guard realised that they were not to be attacked. By the time they reached their battlements again the daring sailors were well along the road to safety and quite out of musket range.

The soldiers at San Geronimo had been roused by the sound of firing in the Capital and they quickly realised what had occurred as the little band of sailors approached their citadel. Puna and Joan were almost exhausted by their efforts and they were hard-pressed to keep their feet, although the stalwart sailors assisted them on their way. Excitement lent strength to the tired limbs of Garry Graeme and Trap Farthing and they shuffled stiffly through the dust of the road, the early morning sun glinting upon their sweat-bedewed foreheads.

A shower of musket balls assailed the column as it approached within range of the fort of San Geronimo and one of the leading sailors fell, stricken to the heart. So far he had been the only Englishman to sustain a hurt but, as the leaden balls whistled about their ears, several of the sailors uttered ejaculations of pain, and one man, who was wounded in the legs, had perforce to be carried by three of his unwounded companions.

Matters were becoming grave for the little party until their leader thought of the questionable expedient of placing the priest at the head of the party. When his black soutane was seen and the cleric recognised by the Spaniards in the fort, a yell of anger was raised, but the firing ceased forthwith. Whether the young lieutenant in charge of the little party was justified

in resorting to this means to protect the women who claimed his protection is a matter which is best left to his own conscience. If Garry had any qualms about the matter they were soon quieted when he realised that, for the nonce, Joan was less likely to be hurt. His attention was immediately attracted to a large party of Spaniards who had sallied forth from San Geronimo in the hope of cutting off the little band of Englishmen from a larger body of English troops who could be seen, a mile away, running to the rescue of their hard-pressed companions.

Bordering the road, on the side farther away from the fort, was an almost impenetrable jungle, in which lay the rotting bodies of scores of English soldiers who had perished in the first attack upon the city. It was impossible for the sailors to take refuge in the heavy cactus and they were compelled to continue along the dusty road. But each hand grasped stoutly the hilt of a cutlass and each English heart beat firm with resolve as the approaching Spaniards neared them.

The defenders of the fort shouted in anticipated triumph as they leaped over the rough ground toward their prey. The nearest Spaniards were but two-score paces away from the grim-lipped Englishmen when a sudden burst of horrible sound shattered the morning

air and the van of the attackers melted away in writhing heaps. Another volley of musketry-fire sounded from the far side of the road and the demoralised Spaniards faltered and broke before the savage charge of the surprise party of Otway's veterans. Few of them reached the safety of San Geronimo's protecting walls, and a ghastly mass of dead and dying men covered the ground when the smoke of battle died away.

Trap and Garry had accomplished the seeming impossible, and they had won through against almost insurmountable odds. They were safe at last !

In Venables' camp the weary but happy fugitives were received by that immaculately-groomed soldier himself, who advanced to the sentry lines to meet the wildly hilarious soldiers and their tattered charges. He shook hands with Garry and bowed low to Joan Manvers, who stood beside her lover clinging happily to his arm.

"Accept my felicitations, sir," he said, and he waved away Garry's protestations of gratitude. "Reserve your thanks for the person to whom they are due. Had it not been for the little dusky maiden who penetrated our lines yestere'en you would still be languishing in the hands of the Spaniards. But I am anxious to know who you are, sir, and how you fell into

the hands of the Spaniards. This charming lady is, no doubt, your wife."

Garry glanced sidelong at his companion.

"Nay, sir," he replied. "Lady Manvers is not yet my wife——"

Venables started and he glanced sharply at the girl.

"Lady Manvers!" he uttered in surprise. "Surely not the young bride of my friend, Sir Howard Manvers?"

"She is Sir Howard's widow."

Venables stared incredulously at the man who stood before him.

"But Sir Howard Manvers is in Virginia!" he gasped. "I understood that his appointment had been sanctioned by the Protector himself and that——"

"He is dead," was Garry's response. "The *Happy Adventure*, upon which he had set sail for the plantations, was captured and burned by the Spaniards, and Lady Manvers and I are the only survivors."

Venables twisted his beard in his agitation.

"The *Happy Adventure* sunk!" he mused wonderingly. "I knew her captain very well indeed and, though Master Ballantyne and I were not the best of friends, I am grieved to hear of his death. And Sir Howard, too! Heigh-ho, 'tis most uncommon sad. But lud, I must not keep ye standing here when ye must

be well-nigh starving for good English food—and weary withal, methinks.”

He stared hard at Trap Farthing who, at the mention of food, had sighed loudly.

“Tell me, Master Graeme,” he said. “If you and Lady Manvers be the only survivors of the merchantman, how came this fellow to accompany you?”

He nodded toward the sheepish figure of the ex-pirate, who darted an anxious look toward Garry. Trap knew that the penalty of piracy was death, and he trusted to his master to persuade the general to pardon him.

“His vessel was also sunk by the galleon that destroyed the *Happy Adventure*,” said Garry. “What was the name of your ship, Trap?” he asked unthinkingly, turning to his friend.

Trap looked abashed.

“The *Prudent Mary*, sir,” he returned.

Venables scowling regarded Farthing, who looked uncomfortably at his feet.

“What became of John Taylor and his cowardly crew?” he asked shortly.

“They all died, sir. I am the only one of Master Taylor’s men who escaped the wrath of the Dons. They fought bravely, sir,” he added, his pride touched by the soldier’s reference to his dead shipmates.

“Aye, that they did,” seconded Garry, and he gave the general a brief account of the

pirate's gallant attempt to aid the *Happy Adventure* in her desperate plight.

Venables surveyed his immaculate fingernails and he did not look up as he said :

" I see no reason why my friend Penn should know that this man is outlawed. His sense of duty is such that I am afraid our brave friend would swing from a yard-arm were he to know that he is one of John Taylor's crew. Think well, Master Graeme," he added, looking blandly at Garry. " Was not this man also a survivor of the ill-fated *Happy Adventure* ? "

Both Garry and Trap grinned at one another and the former nodded his head affirmatively.

While this colloquy was taking place, Puna had been standing beside the attentive Trap, her frail body supported by a somewhat embarrassed seaman. The brown skin of her face gradually assumed a leaden hue as she stood, hidden by her lover's body from sight of the general, and he, as Trap shifted his position, caught sight of the pain-lined face and staring eyes.

" Gramercy ! " he exclaimed with admiration in his voice. " It pleases me mightily to see that the little Indian maiden passed through the Spanish lines without scathe. Perdy ! the damozel has the heart of a man ! "

Venables' words were quite unintelligible to Puna, though she understood the meaning of his friendly expression. But even as she smiled

in acknowledgment, her legs gave way under her and she sank limply to the ground, and the man who had supported her stared blankly at his right hand, which was thickly covered with blood.

"Odzookens!" he murmured stupidly.
"What is this!"

The priest was the first of the astonished men to spring to the girl's assistance and he, with infinite tenderness, stooped down and took her head in his arms. Trap uttered an alarmed ejaculation and bent down beside the priest as the latter hurriedly felt about the maiden's slim body for sign of the wound.

"She has been shot through the lungs!" exclaimed the Spaniard as his hand encountered the throbbing wound in the girl's chest, and Garry, who alone understood the man's words, which were spoken in his native tongue, bent over the swooning girl and hastily drew back the tight skin jerkin which Trap had fashioned for her from the agouti wrap. The ragged hole, upon the edges of which the dried blood had crusted, was evidence enough to his experienced eyes that the girl was grievously wounded.

Venables, disregarding the fact that the dirty ground would play havoc with his silken breeches, dropped to his knees beside the priest and with an exclamation of pity relieved the good man of his burden and tenderly supported Puna's head in his arms.

“Run quickly in search of a leech!” he commanded one of his officers, but Garry looked at him and sadly shook his head.

“She is beyond the services of a physician,” he said and, at his words, Trap moaned piteously and buried his face in one of the girl’s cold hands. Her eyes flickered and opened unsteadily, and a smile curved her lips as she softly stroked her lover’s face with gentle fingers.

When darkness fell the sky above the city was aglow with the reflection of an angry conflagration which blazed about the spot where had stood the House of the Inquisition. The roar and crackle of the flames could be plainly heard from the most advanced outposts of the English lines and the bearded soldiers smiled with grim satisfaction as they gazed upon the impressive spectacle.

And that night Puna died.

XIII

To Some, the Prize . . .

OF Venables’ unsuccessful siege of Santo Domingo de Guzmán, and of Penn’s abortive attempts to batter this stronghold into submission with the great guns of his ships this narrative has no concern. Suffice it that, on a morning one week later—June 3rd,

1655, to be exact—Garry and Joan stood upon the broad afterdeck of Penn's flagship, the *Swiftsure*, and saw the walls and towers of the capital city of the island disappear astern of them, the scarlet and gold gonfalon of Spain flying defiance to the last.

Trap Farthing, a broken and sorrowful man, accompanied them on the *Swiftsure* and, though he spoke no word of his sorrow, he stood by the rail and his eyes never left the little knoll, so long as it lay in sight, where all that was mortal of Puna, worthy descendant of her ancestress, the noble Anacaona, lay awaiting the final trump. Before the sun had set that night the broken-hearted fellow, his constitution undermined by the privations he had undergone and the overwhelming sorrow that had befallen him, fell a victim to the sickness that was taking heavy toll of Penn's sailors and soldiers, and it was not until the green hills of Devon hove into view that he once more appeared on deck.

Penn's venture had been disastrous, and he and Venables, in consultation, had decided to attack the near-by island of Jamaica and endeavour to retrieve their fortunes. The attack upon the city of Santo Domingo had resulted only in heavy loss to the English and though, in years to come, many thousands of his countrymen were to lay down their lives upon the shores of that accursed island, Penn

knew that the authorities at home would look with extreme disfavour upon the loss of so many English lives and that they would demand an accounting from the leaders of the badly-equipped and badly-led expedition.

Therefore it was with considerable alacrity that Penn approved of Garry's idea that it would be worth his while to attempt to cut out the treasure ships at Azua and so recoup the coffers of the Commonwealth for some of the expenses that the expedition had incurred, and he determined to touch at that port on his way to Jamaica.

As the long line of vessels sailed slowly up the coast Joan could not but contrast the different conditions under which she had once before passed those wooded landmarks. Then she had been the frightened, unwilling prisoner of the Spaniard, Don Alonzo Quesada y Perez, bound for—God alone knew what fate; now she was the honoured guest of the Admiral of an English Fleet and she knew that the future shone bright with promise.

But Garry fretted, though his cup of happiness was almost filled. Never had skies seemed more kindly nor days more fair. Earth was alive with joy and the very breeze in the rigging of the English frigate breathed of Scotland—and Joan Manvers. Were the girl but safely wedded to him he could ask no further favour

of the fates who had willed his happiness ; but no man had as yet joined the lovers in wedlock nor, by reason of their faith, did there seem to be any chance of their union in the near future.

Garry had told William Penn that he was most desirous of wedding the girl at the earliest possible moment, and Joan had added her plea to that of her lover. But though the Admiral helplessly shook his head, Garry was intrigued by the expression on the face of Captain Jonas Paul, master of the frigate *Swiftsure*, who had overheard the conversation between Penn and the lovers. He could have sworn that the doughty Irishman had given him a covert but expressive wink and he determined to speak with the man at the first opportunity.

The chance came that evening as the fleet lay at anchor in the Bay of Ocoa, scarce a league distant from the town of Azua, before whose walls and upon the roads thereabouts bodies of excited Spaniards dashed hither and yon. The sun was setting behind the mountains and its level beams played upon the tips of the masts of the treasure galleons, whose well-concealed harbour had been disclosed to Penn by the elated Scotsman.

“I would speak with you alone, Master Graeme,” whispered Captain Paul in Garry’s ear as the latter awaited Joan’s reappearance from her cabin whither she had retired for a short rest some time previous.

Garry looked up from the rail over which he had been leaning. Stealing a sidelong glance at a sailor with whom he had been holding a desultory conversation, he saw that the man was intent upon the distant landscape and he quietly slipped away and accompanied the captain to a secluded spot in the stern of the vessel.

"Would you take the young lady to wife right speedily?" asked Paul bluntly as the two men sat atop a locker, puffing at long pipes of tobacco, which custom had been adopted by the sailors of the time and which, to Garry, was a most pleasing practice.

Garry looked questioningly at the seaman.

"We have a priest of the Church aboard this vessel," continued Paul; "an Irishman, like myself. He was impressed for service during the recent troublous times in Scotland and he is now gunner's-mate aboard the *Swiftsure*."

"And he will marry us?" asked Garry eagerly.

"An' she is so desirous."

Garry's eyes were dancing.

"Aye, that she is," he replied. "Where is this priest of whom you speak?"

Paul held up a cautionary finger.

"You must say nought of this matter to a single soul," he warned him. "Belike we can arrange to do this thing to-morrow."

"Aboard this ship?"

Paul shook his head.

“Penn would not countenance such a thing aboard the *Swiftsure*,” he answered, and, indeed, one cannot blame him. It might be brought to the attention of the Protector.”

He spat viciously to the deck as he mentioned the hated Cromwell, but he looked cautiously about him in case hostile ears might be listening.

“Then where could the wedding take place?” persisted Garry.

Paul lowered his voice and put his hand confidently upon the other’s knee.

“To-morrow morning,” he said, “Penn intends sending ashore two separate bodies of soldiers and sailors. The sailors will be sent in as a cutting-out party and they will attack and, God willing, capture the galleons of whose location we have learned, thanks to you. The soldiers—Colonel Otway’s splendid fighting men—under Dandy Venables are to make a demonstration against the town, between it and the galleons.”

“And how——?” began Garry, perplexedly.

“I will arrange that you, your lady, and Father O’Rourke—‘Fighting Dick’ O’Rourke, as the sailors aboard this vessel call him—go ashore with the soldiers from this vessel,” continued the captain. “Father O’Rourke can choose from among the crew of the boat the witnesses he may need—though I think that in a case like this no formality is necessary.”

“But—without a church——!” faltered Garry.

“A priest in the position of Father O’Rourke has special dispensation. Be not in doubt as to the legality of the affair,” counselled Paul. “You will be as well and truly married by Father O’Rourke in the forest fastness as though a bishop in his cathedral had performed the ceremony.”

“And Father O’Rourke——?” asked Garry. “Has he been approached?”

“I have spoken to him in anticipation of your falling in with my scheme, and he is ready and willing to do as you desire. I sounded him upon the subject as soon as I heard ye both speaking with the Admiral.”

It was a happy and excited couple who stood beside the mainmast next morning shortly before dawn. With wildly beating hearts Joan and Garry waited while boatload after boatload of silent soldiers and sailors left the vessels and slowly disappeared in the mist which yet veiled the shore. When the last of the boats lay tossing gently beneath the ladder by which the troops had descended from the vessel, Captain Paul approached the lovers and bade them follow. Assisted by two men, Joan made the nerve-racking descent of the ladder in safety, and the little craft followed the others toward the sandy shore.

All was silent; Joan sat beside her sweet-

heart, her hand clasped in his and her interested eyes taking in all the movements of the advance. Viewed from this elevation the slow-moving waves appeared larger and more oily than they had seemed from the high deck of the *Swiftsure*, and she repressed the desire to scream every time the tip of a foam-crested billow lapped over the low gunwale and into the boat. Ahead of them a dozen darker splotches in the grey revealed the location of others of their convoy, and soon, above the mist which was being rapidly dispelled by the warm rays of the sun, she made out the feathery tops of palm-trees.

The silence was broken by a shout, followed by another ; then ensued the sharp crack of a musket, and the startled gulls, wheeling above their heads, had scarce recovered their equanimity before a chorus of wild huzzas told of the landing of the first boatload of English troops.

A bedlam broke out. More and more the sound of musketry increased and finally a sudden spurt of water sprang into the air in a miniature geyser alongside the boat and Captain Paul, curbing his natural desire to join his comrades in the fray, gave orders to his crew to stop rowing in order that his fair passenger might not be subject to the danger of musketry fire. For several minutes the little boat rose and fell in the following surge of the sea until the reassuring quiet which descended upon the

shore informed them that the Spaniards were in retreat and that the English had made good their landing.

The last shreds of fog were swirling into the tree-tops when Garry assisted Joan from the boat to the shore. Upon the sand sat two men, one of whom had been wounded in the arm and who critically supervised the operations of his companion as he carefully bound the injured member with a dirty piece of cloth. His severely personal remarks anent the clumsiness of his mate were stilled as he noted the approach of Captain Paul's party and he grinned abashedly when Joan gave a cluck of sympathy at sight of his bloodied arm.

"'Tis but a small hurt, miss," he explained as he struggled to his feet and held his bandaged arm close to his side. "I can still wield a cutlash with the best of them, and I'll yet pay the Dons back for their impertinence. Lucky for me that Fighting Dick was under orders to stay on the beach here, else I'd have assuredly bled to death. There's no holding this wild Irishman when there's a fight in the offing!"

He turned his smiling face affectionately toward the gunner's-mate ere he touched a grimy finger to his forelock as he noted the captain's eye upon him, and he walked unsteadily down toward the boat and clambered aboard her.

Joan gazed in admiration upon the black-haired giant who stood respectfully but in nowise servile manner before his captain. The flashing black eyes and the rugged physique of the man belied his intellectual and somewhat æsthetic features.

"'Twould take more than one man to impress you against your will, Father," she said deferentially, recognising in the rough-garbed seaman the cultured man of piety and learning.

"Yes, daughter," answered Fighting Dick quietly and with no suggestion of braggadocio in his tones. "It required the united efforts of nine men to force me to their will." He cocked his head as a sudden burst of shooting sounded to the west of them. "But I am glad that God willed that I do his duty here. Methinks the dignity of my calling has not been lowered by my contact with these rough ship-mates—fine fellows and stout fighters all!" he added in a sudden burst of generous affection.

The unwavering steadiness of the man's eyes as he spoke to her; the determined yet kindly cast of the mouth and chin showed to Garry and Joan that the priest was a man upon whose good nature it would be dangerous to presume, and yet a comrade who would give a thousandfold more than he would receive. A strong, resolute man—but one who would understand and tolerate the rough jest

and banter of his fellow sailors and take no offence when none was intended. But one sailor, the forecastle bully, had dared presume upon the forbearance of the priest and he had spoken slightly of O'Rourke's religious views shortly after the Irishman had risen through sheer intelligence and natural ability to the responsible post he held. The witless man who had provoked his wrath had many days to think over his indiscretion as he lay helpless between-decks and, henceforward, the other members of the crew treated the Irishman with ungrudging respect.

The sound of conflict increased in intensity and Captain Paul and the priest exchanged questioning and hopeful glances.

"Methinks my place is yonder with my men," declared the former as the tempting shouts of battle stirred the warrior in him. "I will return to this spot when the Spaniards have been overcome."

O'Rourke smiled apologetically at Garry.

"Had we better not accompany the captain until we get in sight of the fighting?" he suggested. "It would not do to have the wedding interrupted by an unsympathetic band of Spaniards. Do you, Lady Manvers, await us here—we will not tarry long."

Garry was not loath to watch the capture of the galleons, though it was with great reluc-

tance that he kissed Joan and left her in charge of the sailor who had been wounded in the arm. So far as her safety was concerned there was little to worry about save the chance of a stray ball hitting her and, considering that both bodies of fighting men were over half a mile in either direction from the spot upon which they stood, there seemed little likelihood of such an event occurring.

The three men had started off up the beach toward the little lagoon in which the trapped galleons lay, when they heard the patter of footsteps behind them on the hard sand, and they turned to see Joan running after them.

"Stop, gentles, I pray ye!" she panted, and Garry's eyes opened in alarm as his quick glance swept her little body in search of a hurt.

"Thou art not wounded!" he gasped as he sprang to her and took her in his arms.

"Nay, silly!" retorted the girl; "but I could not abide here awaiting your return until I had made ye promise," she included the priest in her comprehensive glance, "that ye would not engage in the fighting."

"I—I——" stammered the big Irishman perplexedly, and he scratched his head as he grinned at Garry.

"I promise thee," replied her lover as he sealed the pact with a kiss; "and I'll do my

best to keep Father O'Rourke from splitting Spanish skulls."

He returned the priest's smile as he glanced in his direction, and O'Rourke, with a sigh of assent, swore faithfully to remain out of danger. Captain Paul grimaced amusedly as he asked the little lady if she was not also solicitous as to his safety.

"It would grieve me sore should harm befall you, Master Paul," she replied feelingly, "but I could not ask you to abstain from that which your brave soul so desires. I will pray for your safety, sir."

Upon the highest point of the little spit of land which separated the lagoon from the sea, O'Rourke and Garry lay down and interestedly watched the reinforced crews of the Spanish ships as they energetically resisted the English attack.

The fight was soon over. Even as they watched, a detachment of sailors crept to the far side of the lagoon and poured in a destructive fire upon the Spaniards who, dismayed by this sudden flank attack, threw down their arms and sought refuge within their vessels. The three small boats, which the English had found drawn up on the beach and which the Spaniards had not thought necessary to destroy, were soon filled with sailors and the nearest galleon was quickly overrun. The crews of the other two ships hastily returned to the decks of their

vessels and, before the triumphant Englishmen leaped over the bulwarks of their ships, they surrendered and met their conquerors with uplifted hands.

The treasure carried by the galleons, later estimated to be worth over £2,000,000, was transferred to the ships' boats in which the seamen had come ashore, and for hours a long line of little craft transferred the bullion and plate from the captured galleons to the two largest of Penn's frigates. Of this huge sum Garry and Trap later divided the tenth part between them as the original discoverers of the hoard.

"What say you, Father?" said Garry at length as, the galleons captured, the prosaic work of transferring the treasure began. "Let us return to the spot where Lady Manvers awaits us."

Nothing loath, the priest consented, and the two men walked back to where, in the stern of the ship's boat, Joan eagerly awaited their return. Captain Jonas Paul soon joined them and, with the wounded sailor, who was now sufficiently recovered to follow after them, the little party made its way into the jungle. In a cleared space among the cactus Father O'Rourke decided the ceremony should take place and, while the hot sun of midday beat down upon them, the holy man joined these two in the bond which could have no earthly sundering.

Upon Hispaniola's distant peaks that night the moon shone down with a misty radiance. Like a fairy fleet enmeshed in a silvery web the vessels of the English flotilla followed in the wake of the *Swiftsure* and Penn himself stood silent upon the deck of his vessel as he looked back upon the path of the moon. What his thoughts were as he sorrowfully regarded the island upon which his hopes had been blasted no man may say, but it was with a heavy, heartfelt sigh that he turned at last to retire to his cabin.

It may have been that his sigh was echoed by a happier one from Garry Graeme. Mayhap some tender sentiment, intended only for the ears of his beloved, was wafted to the ears of the Englishman. Whatever the cause, Penn stopped and looked back, and a smile stole over his grim face as he saw, outlined against the star-flecked sky, a man and a woman in close embrace, and there was full and complete understanding in the wink with which he favoured the moon as he quietly backed away from the lovers.

THE END

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